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RAMSAY MUIR

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THE EXPANSION OF EUROPE

BY

RAMSAY MUIR

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TO

MY MOTHER

PREFACE TO THE FOURTH EDITION

THIS book was written in 1916 as part of a trilogy in which I tried to set in historical perspective certain great movements of modern history that seemed to have come to a culmination in the Great War. The nationalist and the international movements were discussed in *Nationalism and Internationalism*; the growth of democratic institutions in *National Self-government*; and this book completed the survey by describing the extension of European civilisation over the globe, and the imperialist rivalries which accompanied it. In a second edition (1917) parts of the book were greatly expanded. Naturally both of these editions were deeply coloured by the emotions of the war. In a third edition (1921) two long chapters were added on the war and its consequences, and a good many other changes were made; but I did not try to remove the evidences of the war-temper which were too patent in some parts of the book.

In the present edition I have tried to free the book from the symptoms of war-fever, and to set forth a saner and more balanced view than was possible when war was raging of those causes of war which can be traced to extra-European events.

Chapter IX has, for this purpose, been almost wholly rewritten, and Chapter VII very largely. Both, I fear, are substantially longer than they were.

The book has thus been frequently and drastically revised, and I can only admire the patience of my publishers. I hope it will not again be tried in the same way, and that the book has now reached its final form. Indeed, I am surprised, and not a little proud, that a book originally conceived as a sort of glorified war-pamphlet should have shown so much vitality; and I have felt that I was bound to make it as worthy of the favour which has been shown to it as I could. The result of all these revisions has been that the book has grown from 235 to 380 pages; and there are few passages in the last two-thirds of it which have not been more than once rewritten.

RAMSAY MUIR.

RICHMOND, SURREY, 1926.

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THE EXPANSION OF EUROPE

I

THE MEANING AND THE MOTIVES OF IMPERIALISM

One of the most remarkable features of the modern age has been the extension of the influence of European civilisation over the whole world. This process has formed a very important element in the history of the last four centuries, and it has been strangely undervalued by most historians, whose attention has been too exclusively centred upon the domestic politics, diplomacies, and wars of Europe. It has been brought about by the creation of a succession of 'Empires' by the European nations, some of which have broken up, while others survive, but all of which have contributed their share to the general result; and for that reason the term 'Imperialism' is commonly employed to describe the spirit which has led to this astonishing and world-embracing movement of the modern age.

The terms 'Empire' and 'Imperialism' are in some respects unfortunate, because of the suggestion of purely military dominion which they convey; and their habitual employment has led to some unhappy results. It has led men of one school of thought to condemn and repudiate the

whole movement, as an immoral product of brute force, regardless of the rights of conquered peoples. They have refused to study it, and have made no endeavour to understand it; not realising that the movement they were condemning was as inevitable and as irresistible as the movement of the tides—and as capable of being turned to beneficent ends. On the other hand, the implications of these terms have perhaps helped to foster in men of another type of mind an unhealthy spirit of pride in mere domination, as if that were an end in itself, and have led them to exult in the extension of national power, without closely enough considering the purposes for which it was to be used. Both attitudes are deplorable, and in so far as the words 'Empire,' 'Imperial,' and 'Imperialism' tend to encourage them, they are unfortunate words. They certainly do not adequately express the full significance of the process whereby the civilisation of Europe has been made into the civilisation of the world.

Nevertheless the words have to be used, because there are no others which at all cover the facts. And, after all, they are in some ways entirely appropriate. A great part of the world's area is inhabited by peoples who are still in a condition of barbarism, and seem to have rested in that condition for untold centuries. For such peoples the only chance of improvement was that they should pass under the dominion of more highly developed peoples; and to them a European 'Empire' brought, for the first time, not merely

law and justice, but even the rudiments of the only kind of liberty which is worth having, the liberty which rests upon law. Another vast section of the world's population consists of peoples who have in some respects reached a high stage of civilisation, but who have failed to achieve for themselves a mode of organisation which could give them secure order and equal laws. For such peoples also the 'Empire' of Western civilisation, even when it is imposed and maintained by force, may bring advantages which will far outweigh its defects. In these cases the word 'Empire' can be used without violence to its original significance, and yet without apology; and these cases cover by far the greater part of the world.

The words 'Empire' and 'Imperialism' come to us from ancient Rome; and the analogy between the conquering and organising work of Rome and the empire-building work of the modern nation-states is a suggestive and stimulating analogy. The imperialism of Rome extended the modes of a single civilisation, and the Reign of Law which was its essence, over all the Mediterranean lands. The imperialism of the nations to which the torch of Rome has been handed on, has made the Reign of Law, and the modes of a single civilisation, the common possession of the whole world. Rome made the common life of Europe possible. The imperial expansion of the European nations has alone made possible the vision—nay, the certainty—of a future world-

order. For these reasons we may rightly and without hesitation continue to employ these terms, provided that we remember always that the justification of any dominion imposed by a more advanced upon a backward or disorganised people is to be found, not in the extension of mere brute power, but in the enlargement and diffusion, under the shelter of power, of those vital elements in the life of Western civilisation which have been the secrets of its strength, and the greatest of its gifts to the world: the sovereignty of a just and rational system of law, liberty of person, of thought, and of speech, and, finally, where the conditions are favourable, the practice of self-government and the growth of that sentiment of common interest which we call the national spirit. These are the features of Western civilisation which have justified its conquest of the world[1]; and it must be for its success or failure in attaining these ends that we shall commend or condemn the imperial work of each of the nations which have shared in this vast achievement.

Four main motives can be perceived at work in all the imperial activities of the European peoples during the last four centuries. The first, and perhaps the most potent, has been the spirit of national pride, seeking to express itself in the establishment of its dominion over less highly organised peoples. In the exultation

[1] See the first essay in *Nationalism and Internationalism*, in which an attempt is made to work out this idea.

which follows the achievement of national unity each of the nation-states in turn, if the circumstances were at all favourable, has been tempted to impose its power upon its neighbours,[1] or even to seek the mastery of the world. From these attempts have sprung the greatest of the European wars. From them also have arisen all the colonial empires of the European states. It is no mere coincidence that all the great colonising powers have been unified nation-states, and that their imperial activities have been most vigorous when the national sentiment was at its strongest among them. Spain, Portugal, England, France, Holland, Russia: these are the great imperial powers, and they are also the great nation-states. Denmark and Sweden have played a more modest part, in extra-European as in European affairs. Germany and Italy only began to conceive imperial ambitions after their tardy unification in the nineteenth century. Austria, which has never been a nation-state, never became a colonising power. Nationalism, then, with its eagerness for dominion, may be regarded as the chief source of imperialism; and if its effects are unhappy when it tries to express itself at the expense of peoples in whom the potentiality of nationhood exists, they are not necessarily unhappy in other cases. When it takes the form of the settlement of unpeopled lands, or the organisation and development of primitive barbaric peoples, or the reinvigoration and strengthening of old and

[1] *Nationalism and Internationalism*, pp. 60, 64, 104.

decadent societies, it may prove itself a beneficent force. But it is beneficent only in so far as it leads to an enlargement of law and liberty.

The second of the blended motives of imperial expansion has been the desire for commercial profits; and this motive has played so prominent a part, especially in our own time, that we are apt to exaggerate its force, and to think of it as the sole motive. No doubt it has always been present in some degree in all imperial adventures. But until the nineteenth century it probably formed the predominant motive only in regard to the acquisition of tropical lands. So long as Europe continued to be able to produce as much as she needed of the food and the raw materials for industry that her soil and climate were capable of yielding, the commercial motive for acquiring territories in the temperate zone, which could produce only commodities of the same type, was comparatively weak; and the European settlements in these areas, which we have come to regard as the most important products of the imperialist movement, must in their origin and early settlement be mainly attributed to other than commercial motives. But Europe has always depended for most of her luxuries upon the tropics: gold and ivory and gems, spices and sugar and fine woven stuffs, from a very early age found their way into Europe from India and the East, coming by slow and devious caravan routes to the shores of the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. Until the end of the fifteenth century the European

trader had no direct contact with the sources of these precious commodities; the supply of them was scanty and the price high. The desire to gain a more direct access to the sources of this traffic, and to obtain control of the supply, formed the principal motive for the great explorations. But these, in their turn, disclosed fresh tropical areas worth exploiting, and introduced new luxuries, such as tobacco and tea, which soon took rank as necessities. They also brought a colossal increment of wealth to the countries which had undertaken them. Hence the acquisition of a share in, or a monopoly of, these lucrative lines of trade became a primary object of ambition to all the great states. In the nineteenth century Europe began to be unable to supply her own needs in regard to the products of the temperate zone, and therefore to desire control over other areas of this type; but until then it was mainly in regard to the tropical or sub-tropical areas that the commercial motive formed the predominant element in the imperial rivalries of the nation-states. And even to-day it is over these areas that their conflicts are most acute.

A third motive for imperial expansion, which must not be overlooked, is the zeal for propaganda: the eagerness of virile peoples to propagate the religious and political ideas which they have adopted. But this is only another way of saying that nations are impelled upon the imperial career by the desire to extend the influence of their conception of civilisation, their *Kultur*.

In one form or another this motive has always been present. At first it took the form of religious zeal. The spirit of the Crusaders was inherited by the Portuguese and the Spaniards, whose whole history had been one long crusade against the Moors. When the Portuguese started upon the exploration of the African coast, they could scarcely have sustained to the end that long and arduous task if they had been allured by no other prospect than the distant hope of finding a new route to the East. They were buoyed up also by the desire to strike a blow for Christianity. They expected to find the mythical Christian empire of Prester John, and to join hands with him in overthrowing the infidel. When Columbus persuaded Queen Isabella of Castile to supply the means for his madcap adventure, it was by a double inducement that he won her assent: she was to gain access to the wealth of the Indies, but she was also to be the means of converting the heathen to a knowledge of Christianity; and this double motive continually recurs in the early history of the Spanish Empire. France could scarcely, perhaps, have persisted in maintaining her far from profitable settlements on the barren shores of the St. Lawrence if the missionary motive had not existed alongside of the motives of national pride and the desire for profits: her great work of exploration in the region of the Great Lakes and the Mississippi Valley was due quite as much to the zeal of the heroic missionaries of the Jesuit and other orders as to the enterprise

of trappers and traders. In English colonisation, indeed, the missionary motive was never, until the nineteenth century, so strongly marked. But its place was taken by a parallel political motive. The belief that they were diffusing the free institutions in which they took so much pride certainly formed an element in the colonial activities of the English. It is both foolish and unscientific to disregard this element of propaganda in the imperialist movement, still more to treat the assertion of it by the colonising powers as mere hypocrisy. The motives of imperial expansion, as of other human activities, are mixed, and the loftier elements in them are not often predominant. But the loftier elements are always present. It is hypocrisy to pretend that they are alone or even chiefly operative. But it is cynicism wholly to deny their influence. And of the two sins cynicism is the worse, because by over-emphasising it strengthens and cultivates the lower among the mixed motives by which men are ruled.

The fourth of the governing motives of imperial expansion is the need of finding new homes for the surplus population of the colonising people. This was not in any country a very powerful motive until the nineteenth century, for overpopulation did not exist in any serious degree in any of the European states until that age. Many of the political writers in seventeenth-century England, indeed, regarded the whole movement of colonisation with alarm, because it seemed to be drawing off men who could not be spared. But

if the population was nowhere excessive, there were in all countries certain classes for which emigration to new lands offered a desired opportunity. There were the men bitten with the spirit of adventure, to whom the work of the pioneer presented an irresistible attraction. Such men are always numerous in virile communities, and when in any society their numbers begin to diminish, its decay is at hand. The imperial activities of the modern age have more than anything else kept the breed alive in all European countries, and above all in Britain. To this type belonged the *conquistadores* of Spain, the Elizabethan seamen, the French explorers of North America, the daring Dutch navigators. Again, there were the younger sons of good family for whom the homeland presented small opportunities, but who found in colonial settlements the chance of creating estates like those of their fathers at home, and carried out with them bands of followers drawn from among the sons of their fathers' tenantry. To this class belonged most of the planter-settlers of Virginia, the seigneurs of French Canada, the lords of the great Portuguese feudal holdings in Brazil, and the dominant class in all the Spanish colonies. Again, there were the 'undesirables' of whom the home government wanted to be rid—convicts, paupers, political prisoners; they were drafted out in great numbers to the new lands, often as indentured servants, to endure servitude for a period of years and then to be merged in the colonial population.

When the loss of the American colonies deprived Britain of her dumping-ground for convicts, she had to find a new region in which to dispose of them; and this led to the first settlement of Australia, six years after the establishment of American independence. Finally, in the age of bitter religious controversy there was a constant stream of religious exiles seeking new homes in which they could freely follow their own forms of worship. The Puritan settlers of New England are the outstanding example of this type. But they were only one group among many. Huguenots from France, Moravians from Austria, persecuted 'Palatines' and Salzburgers from Germany, poured forth in an almost unbroken stream. It was natural that they should take refuge in the only lands where full religious freedom was offered to them; and these were especially some of the British settlements in America, and the Dutch colony at the Cape of Good Hope.

It is often said that the overflow of Europe over the world has been a sort of renewal of the folk-wandering of primitive ages. That is a misleading view: the movement has been far more deliberate and organised, and far less due to the pressure of external circumstances, than the early movements of peoples in the Old World. Not until the nineteenth century, when the industrial transformation of Europe brought about a really acute pressure of population, can it be said that the mere pressure of need, and the shortage of sustenance in their older homes, has sent large

bodies of settlers into the new lands. Until that period the imperial movement has been due to voluntary and purposive action in a far higher degree than any of the blind early wanderings of peoples. The will-to-dominion of virile nations exulting in their nationhood; the desire to obtain a more abundant supply of luxuries than had earlier been available, and to make profits therefrom; the zeal of peoples to impose their mode of civilisation upon as large a part of the world as possible; the existence in the Western world of many elements of restlessness and dissatisfaction, adventurers, portionless younger sons, or religious enthusiasts: these have been the main operative causes of this huge movement during the greater part of the four centuries over which it has extended. And as it has sprung from such diverse and conflicting causes, it has assumed an infinite variety of forms; and both deserves and demands a more respectful study as a whole than has generally been given to it.

II

THE ERA OF IBERIAN MONOPOLY

During the Middle Ages the contact of Europe with the rest of the world was but slight. It was shut off by the great barrier of the Islamic Empire, upon which the Crusades made no permanent impression; and although the goods of the East came by caravan to the Black Sea ports, to Constantinople, to the ports of Syria, and to Egypt, where they were picked up by the Italian traders, these traders had no direct knowledge of the countries which were the sources of their wealth. The threat of the Empire of Genghis Khan in the thirteenth century aroused the interest of Europe, and the bold friars, Carpini and Rubruquis, made their way to the centres of that barbaric sovereign's power in the remote East, and brought back stories of what they had seen; later the Poli, especially the great Marco, undertook still more daring and long-continued journeys, which made India and Cathay less unreal to Europeans, and stimulated the desire for further knowledge. The later mediæval maps of the world, like that of Fra Mauro (1459),[1] which

[1] Simplified reproductions of this and the other early maps alluded to are printed in Philip's *Students' Atlas of Modern History*, which also contains a long series of maps illustrating the extra-European activities of the European states.

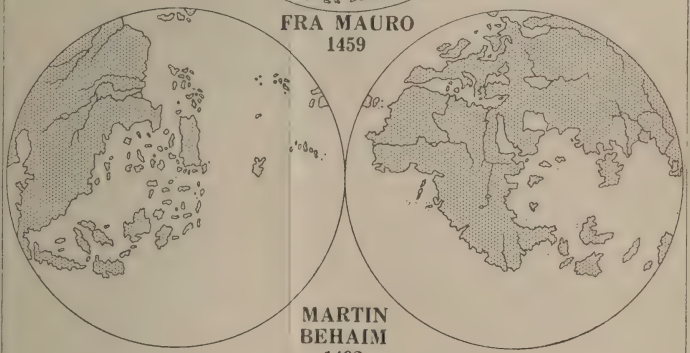
incorporate this knowledge, are less wildly imaginative than their predecessors, and show a vague notion of the general configuration of the main land-masses in the Old World. But beyond the fringes of the Mediterranean the world was still in the main unknown to, and unaffected by, European civilisation down to the middle of the fifteenth century.

Then, suddenly, came the great era of explorations, which were made possible by the improvements in navigation worked out during the fifteenth century, and which in two generations incredibly transformed the aspect of the world. The marvellous character of this revelation can perhaps be illustrated by the comparison of two maps, that of Behaim, published in 1492, and that of Schöner, published in 1523. Apart from its adoption of the theory that the earth was globular, not round and flat, Behaim's map shows little advance upon Fra Mauro, except that it gives a clearer idea of the shape of Africa, due to the earlier explorations of the Portuguese. But Schöner's map shows that the broad outlines of the distribution of the land-masses of both hemispheres were already in 1523 pretty clearly understood. This astonishing advance was due to the daring and enterprise of the Portuguese explorers, Diaz, Da Gama, Cabral, and of the adventurers in the service of Spain, Columbus, Balboa, Vespucci, and —greatest of them all—Magellan.

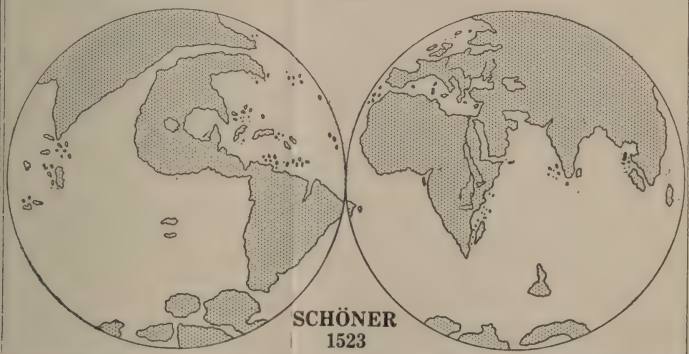
These astonishing discoveries placed for a time the destinies of the outer world in the hands of Spain and Portugal, and the first period of

THREE EARLY MAPS

FRA MAURO
1459



MARTIN
BEHAIM
1492



SCHÖNER
1523

GEORGE PHILIP & SON LTD

European imperialism is the period of Iberian monopoly, extending to 1588. A Papal award in 1493 confirmed the division of the non-European world between the two powers, by a judgment which the orthodox were bound to accept, and did accept for two generations. All the oceans, except the North Atlantic, were closed to the navigators of other nations; and these two peoples were given, for a century, the opportunity of showing in what guise they would introduce the civilisation of Europe to the rest of the globe. Pioneers as they were in the work of imperial development, it is not surprising that they should have made great blunders; and in the end their foreign dominions weakened rather than strengthened the home countries, and contributed to drag them down from the high place which they had taken among the nations.

The Portuguese power in the East was never more than a commercial dominion. Except in Goa, on the west coast of India, no considerable number of settlers established themselves at any point; and the Goanese settlement is the only instance of the formation of a mixed race, half Indian and half European. Wherever the Portuguese power was established, it proved itself hard and intolerant; for the spirit of the Crusader was ill-adapted to the establishment of good relations with the non-Christian peoples. The rivalry of Arab traders in the Indian Ocean was mercilessly destroyed, and there was as little mercy for the Italian merchants, who found the

stream of goods that the Arabs had sent them by way of the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf almost wholly intercepted. No doubt any other people, finding itself in the position which the Portuguese occupied in the early sixteenth century, would have been tempted to use their power in the same way to establish a complete monopoly; but the success with which the Portuguese attained their aim was in the end disastrous to them. It was followed by, if it did not cause, a rapid deterioration of the ability with which their affairs were directed; and when other European traders began to appear in the field, they were readily welcomed by the princes of India and the chieftains of the Spice Islands. In the West the Portuguese settlement in Brazil was a genuine colony, or branch of the Portuguese nation, because here there existed no earlier civilised people to be dominated. But both in East and West the activities of the Portuguese were from the first subjected to an over-rigid control by the home government. Eager to make the most of a great opportunity for the national advantage, the rulers of Portugal allowed no freedom to the enterprise of individuals. The result was that in Portugal itself, in the East, and in Brazil, initiative was destroyed, and the brilliant energy which this gallant little nation had displayed evaporated within a century. It was finally destroyed when, in 1580, Portugal and her empire fell under the dominion of Spain, and under all the reactionary influences of the govern-

ment of Philip II. By the time this heavy yoke was shaken off, in the middle of the seventeenth century, the Portuguese dominion had fallen into decay. To-day nothing of it remains save 'spheres of influence' on the western and eastern coasts of Africa, two or three ports on the coast of India, the Azores, and the island of Maçao off the coast of China.

The Spanish dominion in Central and South America was of a different character. When once they had realised that it was not a new route to Asia, but a new world, that Columbus had discovered for them, the Spaniards sought no longer mainly for the riches to be derived from traffic, but for the precious metals, which they unhappily discovered in slight quantities in Hispaniola, but in immense abundance in Mexico and Peru. It is impossible to exaggerate the heroic valour and daring of Cortez, Pizarro, Hernando de Soto, Orellana, and the rest of the *conquistadores* who carved out in a single generation the vast Spanish empire in Central and South America; but it is equally impossible to exaggerate their cruelty, which was born in part of the fact that they were a handful among myriads, in part of the fierce traditions of crusading warfare against the infidel. Yet without undervaluing their daring, it must be recognised that they had a comparatively easy task in conquering the peoples of these tropical lands. In the greater islands of the West Indies they found a gentle and yielding people, who rapidly died out under the forced labour of the

mines and plantations, and had to be replaced by negro slave-labour imported from Africa. In Mexico and Peru they found civilisations which on the material side were developed to a comparatively high point, and which collapsed suddenly when their governments and capitals had been overthrown ; while their peoples, habituated to slavery, readily submitted to a new servitude. It must be recognised, to the honour of the government of Charles v. and his successors, that they honestly attempted to safeguard the usages and possessions of the conquered peoples, and to protect them in some degree against the exploitation of their conquerors. But it was the protection of a subject race doomed to the condition of Helotage ; they were protected, as the Jews were protected by the kings of mediæval England, because they were a valuable asset of the crown. The policy of the Spanish government did not avail to prevent an intermixture of the races, because the Spaniards themselves came from a sub-tropical country, and the Mexicans and Peruvians especially were separated from them by no impassable gulf such as separates the negro or the Australian bushman from the white man. Central and Southern America thus came to be peopled by a hybrid race, speaking Spanish, large elements of which were conscious of their own inferiority. This in itself would perhaps have been a barrier to progress. But the concentration of attention upon the precious metals, and the neglect of industry due to this cause and to

the employment of slave-labour, formed a further obstacle. And in addition to all, the Spanish government, partly with a view to the execution of its native policy, partly because it regarded the precious metals as the chief product of these lands and wished to maintain close control over them, and partly because centralised autocracy was carried to its highest pitch in Spain, allowed little freedom of action to the local governments, and almost none to the settlers. It treated the trade of these lands as a monopoly of the home country, to be carried on under the most rigid control. It did little or nothing to develop the natural resources of the empire, but rather discouraged them lest they should compete with the labours of the mine; and in what concerned the intellectual welfare of its subjects, it limited itself, as in Spain, to ensuring that no infection of heresy or freethought should reach any part of its dominions. All this had a deadening effect; and the surprising thing is, not that the Spanish Empire should have fallen into an early decrepitude, but that it should have shown such comparative vigour, tenacity, and power of expansion as it actually exhibited. Not until the nineteenth century did the vast natural resources of these regions begin to undergo any rapid development; that is to say, not until most of the settlements had discarded the connection with Spain; and even then, the defects bred into the people by three centuries of reactionary and unenlightened government produced in them an

incapacity to use their newly won freedom, and condemned these lands to a long period of anarchy. It would be too strong to say that it would have been better had the Spaniards never come to America; for, when all is said, they have done more than any other people, save the British, to plant European modes of life in the non-European world. But it is undeniable that their dominion afforded a far from happy illustration of the working of Western civilisation in a new field, and exercised a very unfortunate reaction upon the life of the mother-country.

The conquest of Portugal and her empire by Philip II., in 1580, turned Spain into a Colossus bestriding the world, and it was inevitable that this world-dominion should be challenged by the other European states which faced upon the Atlantic. The challenge was taken up by three nations, the English, the French, and the Dutch, all the more readily because the very existence of all three and the religion of two of them were threatened by the apparently overwhelming strength of Spain in Europe. As in so many later instances, the European conflict was inevitably extended to the non-European world. From the middle of the sixteenth century onwards these three peoples attempted, with increasing daring, to circumvent or to undermine the Spanish power, and to invade the sources of the wealth which made it dangerous to them; but the attempt, so far as it was made on the seas and beyond them, was in the main, and for a long time, due

to the spontaneous energies of volunteers, not to the action of governments. Francis I. of France sent out the Venetian Verazzano to explore the American shores of the North Atlantic, as Henry VII. of England had earlier sent the Genoese Cabots. But nothing came of these official enterprises. More effective were the pirate adventurers who preyed upon the commerce between Spain and her possessions in the Netherlands as it passed through the Narrow Seas, running the gauntlet of English, French, and Dutch. More effective still were the attempts to find new routes to the East, not barred by the Spanish dominions, by a north-east or a north-west passage; for some of the earlier of these adventures led to fruitful unintended consequences, as when the Englishman Chancellor, seeking for a north-east passage, found the route to Archangel and opened up a trade with Russia, or as when the Frenchman Cartier, seeking for a north-west passage, hit upon the great estuary of the St. Lawrence, and marked out a claim for France to the possession of the area which it drained. Most effective of all were the smuggling and piratical raids into the reserved waters of West Africa and the West Indies, and later into the innermost penetralia of the Pacific Ocean, which were undertaken with rapidly increasing boldness by the navigators of all three nations, but above all by the English. Drake is the supreme exponent of these methods; and his career illustrates in the clearest fashion the steady

diminution of Spanish prestige under these attacks, and the growing boldness and maritime skill of its attackers.

From the time of Drake's voyage round the world (1577) and its insulting defiance of the Spanish power on the west coast of South America, it became plain that the maintenance of Spanish monopoly could not last much longer. It came to its end, finally and unmistakably, in the defeat of the Grand Armada. That supreme victory threw the ocean roads of trade open, not to the English only, but to the sailors of all nations. In its first great triumph the English navy had established the Freedom of the Seas, of which it has ever since been the chief defender. Since 1588 no power has dreamt of claiming the exclusive right of traversing any of the open seas of the world, as until that date Spain and Portugal had claimed the exclusive right of using the South Atlantic, the Pacific, and the Indian Oceans.

So ends the first period in the imperial expansion of the Western peoples, the period of Spanish and Portuguese monopoly. Meanwhile, unnoticed in the West, a remarkable eastward expansion was being effected by the Russian people. By insensible stages they had passed the unreal barrier between Europe and Asia, and spread themselves thinly over the vast spaces of Siberia, subduing and assimilating the few and scattered tribes whom they met; by the end of the seventeenth century they had already reached the Pacific Ocean. It was a conquest marked

by no great struggles or victories, an insensible permeation of half a continent. This process was made the easier for the Russians, because in their own stock were blended elements of the Mongol race which they found scattered over Siberia: they were only reversing the process which Genghis Khan had so easily accomplished in the thirteenth century. And as the Russians had scarcely yet begun to be affected by Western civilisation, there was no great cleavage or contrast between them and their new subjects, and the process of assimilation took place easily. But the settlement of Siberia was very gradual. At the beginning of the eighteenth century the total population of this vast area amounted to not more than 300,000 souls, and it was not until the nineteenth century that there was any rapid increase.

III

THE RIVALRY OF THE DUTCH, THE FRENCH AND THE ENGLISH, 1588-1763

THE second period of European imperialism was filled with the rivalries of the three nations which had in different degrees contributed to the breakdown of the Spanish monopoly, the Dutch, the French, and the English; and we have next to inquire how far, and why, these peoples were more successful than the Spaniards in planting in the non-European world the essentials of European civilisation. The long era of their rivalry extended from 1588 to 1763, and it can be most conveniently divided into three sections. The first of these extended from 1588 to about 1660, and may be called the period of experiment and settlement; during its course the leadership fell to the Dutch. The second extended from 1660 to 1713, and may be called the period of systematic colonial policy, and of growing rivalry between France and England. The third, from 1713 to 1763, was dominated by the intense rivalry of these two countries, decadent Spain joining in the conflict on the side of France, while the declining power of the Dutch was on the whole ranged on the side of Britain; and it ended with the complete ascendancy of Britain, supreme at once in the West and in the East.

(*a*) *The Period of Settlement*, 1588-1660

The special interest of the first half of the seventeenth century is that in the trading and colonial experiments of this period the character of the work which was to be done by the three new candidates for extra-European empire was already very clearly and instructively displayed. They met as rivals in every field: in the archipelago of the West Indies, and the closely connected slaving establishments of West Africa, in the almost empty lands of North America, and in the trading enterprises of the far East; and everywhere a difference of spirit and method appeared.

The Dutch, who made a far more systematic and more immediately profitable use of the opportunity than either of their rivals, regarded the whole enterprise as a great national commercial venture. It was conducted by two powerful trading corporations, the Company of the East Indies and the Company of the West Indies; but though directed by the merchants of Amsterdam, these were genuinely national enterprises; their shareholders were drawn from every province and every class; and they were backed by all the influence which the States-General of the United Provinces—controlled during this period mainly by the commercial interest—was able to wield.

The Company of the East Indies was the richer and the more powerful of the two, because the

trade of the Far East was beyond comparison the most lucrative in the world. Aiming straight at the source of the greatest profits—the trade in spices—the Dutch strove to establish a monopoly control over the Spice Islands and, in general, over the Malay Archipelago; and they were so successful that their influence remains to-day predominant in this region. Their first task was to overthrow the ascendancy of the Portuguese, and in this they were willing to co-operate with the English traders. But the bulk of the work was done by the Dutch, for the English East India Company was poor in comparison with the Dutch, was far less efficiently organised, and, in especial, could not count upon the steady support of the national government. It was mainly the Dutch who built forts and organised factories, because they alone had sufficient capital to maintain heavy standing charges. Not unnaturally they did not see why the English should reap any part of the advantage of their work, and set themselves to establish a monopoly. In the end the English were driven out with violence. After the Massacre of Amboyna (1623) their traders disappeared from these seas, and the Dutch supremacy remained unchallenged until the nineteenth century.

It was a quite intolerant commercial monopoly which they had instituted, but from the commercial point of view it was administered with great intelligence. Commercial control brought in its train territorial sovereignty, over Java and

many of the neighbouring islands; and this sovereignty was exercised by the directors of the company primarily with a view to trade interests. It was a trade despotism, but a trade despotism wisely administered, which gave justice and order to its native subjects. On the mainland of India the Dutch never attained a comparable degree of power, because the native states were strong enough to hold them in check. But in this period their factories were more numerous and more prosperous than those of the English, their chief rivals; and over the island of Ceylon they established an ascendancy almost as complete as that which they had created in the archipelago.

They were intelligent enough also to see the importance of good calling-stations on the route to the East. For this purpose they planted a settlement in Mauritius, and another at the Cape of Good Hope. But these settlements were never regarded as colonies. They were stations belonging to a trading company; they remained under its complete control, and were allowed no freedom of development, still less any semblance of self-government. If Cape Colony grew into a genuine colony, or offshoot of the mother-country, it was in spite of the company, not by reason of its encouragement, and from first to last the company's relations with the settlers were of the most unhappy kind. For the company would do nothing at the Cape that was not necessary for the Eastern trade, which was its supreme interest,

and the colonists naturally did not take the same view. It was this concentration upon purely commercial aims which also prevented the Dutch from making any use of the superb field for European settlement opened up by the enterprise of their explorers in Australia and New Zealand. These fair lands were left unpeopled, largely because they promised no immediate trade profits.

In the West the enterprises of the Dutch were only less vigorous than in the East, and they were marked by the same feature of an intense concentration upon the purely commercial aspect. While the English and (still more) the French adventurers made use of the lesser West Indian islands, unoccupied by Spain, as bases for piratical attacks upon the Spanish trade, the Dutch, with a shrewd instinct, early deserted this purely destructive game for the more lucrative business of carrying on a smuggling trade with the Spanish mainland; and the islands which they acquired (such as Curaçoa) were, unlike the French and English islands, especially well placed for this purpose. They established a sugar colony in Guiana. But their main venture in this region was the conquest of a large part of Northern Brazil from the Portuguese (1624); and here their exploitation was so merciless, under the direction of the Company of the West Indies, that the inhabitants, though they had been dissatisfied with the Portuguese government, and had at first welcomed the Dutch conquerors, soon

revolted against them, and after twenty years drove them out.

On the mainland of North America the Dutch planted a single colony—the New Netherlands, with its capital at New Amsterdam, later New York. Their commercial instinct had once more guided them wisely. They had found the natural centre for the trade of North America; for by way of the river Hudson and its affluent, the Mohawk, New York commands the only clear path through the mountain belt which everywhere shuts off the Atlantic coast region from the central plain of America. Founded and controlled by the Company of the West Indies, this settlement was intended to be, not primarily the home of a branch of the Dutch nation beyond the seas, but a trading-station for collecting the furs and other products of the inland regions. At Orange (Albany), which stands at the junction of the Mohawk and the Hudson, the Dutch traders collected the furs brought in by Indian trappers from west and north; New Amsterdam was the port of export; and if settlers were encouraged, it was only that they might supply the men and the means and the food for carrying on this traffic. The Company of the West Indies administered the colony purely from this point of view. No powers of self-government were allowed to the settlers; and, as in Cape Colony, the relations between the colonists and the governing company were never satisfactory, because the colonists felt that their interests were wholly subordinated.

The distinguishing feature of French imperial activity during this period was its dependence upon the support and direction of the home government, which was the natural result of the highly centralised régime established in France during the modern era. Only in one direction was French activity successfully maintained by private enterprise, and this was in the not very reputable field of West Indian buccaneering, in which the French were even more active than their principal rivals and comrades, the English. The word 'buccaneer' itself comes from the French: *boucan* means the wood-fire at which the pirates dried and smoked their meat, and these fires, blazing on deserted islands, must often have warned merchant vessels to avoid an ever-present danger. The island of Tortuga, which commands the passage between Cuba and Hispaniola through which the bulk of the Spanish traffic passed on its way from Mexico to Europe, was the most important of the buccaneering bases, and although it was at first used by the buccaneers of all nations, it soon became a purely French possession, as did, later, the adjoining portion of the island of Hispaniola (San Domingo). The French did, indeed, like the English, plant sugar colonies in some of the lesser Antilles; but during the first half of the seventeenth century they attained no great prosperity.

For the greater enterprises of trade in the East and colonisation in the West, the French relied almost wholly upon government assistance, and

although both Henry IV. in the first years of the century, and Richelieu in its second quarter, were anxious to give what help they could, internal dissensions were of such frequent occurrence in France during this period that no systematic or continuous governmental aid was available. Hence the French enterprises both in the East and in the West were on a small scale, and achieved little success. The French East India Company was all but extinct when Colbert took it in hand in 1664; it was never able to compete with its Dutch or even its English rival.

But the period saw the establishment of two French colonies in North America: Acadia (Nova Scotia) on the coast, and Canada, with Quebec as its centre, in the St. Lawrence valley, separated from one another on land by an almost impassable barrier of forest and mountain. These two colonies were founded, the first in 1605 and the second in 1608, almost at the same moment as the first English settlement on the American continent. They had a hard struggle during the first fifty years of their existence; for the number of settlers was very small, the soil was barren, the climate severe, and the Red Indians, especially the ferocious Iroquois towards the south, were far more formidable enemies than those who bordered on the English colonies.

There is no part of the history of European colonisation more full of romance and of heroism than the early history of French Canada; an incomparable atmosphere of gallantry and

devotion seems to overhang it. From the first, despite their small numbers and their difficulties, these settlers showed a daring in exploration which was only equalled by the Spaniards, and to which there is no parallel in the records of the English colonies. At the very outset the great explorer Champlain mapped out the greater part of the Great Lakes, and thus reached farther into the continent than any Englishman before the end of the eighteenth century; and although this is partly explained by the fact that the St. Lawrence and the lakes afforded an easy approach to the interior, while farther south the forest-clad ranges of the Alleghanies constituted a very serious barrier, this does not diminish the French pre-eminence in exploration. Nor can anything in the history of European colonisation surpass the heroism of the French missionaries among the Indians, who faced and endured incredible tortures in order to bring Christianity to the barbarians. No serious missionary enterprise was ever undertaken by the English colonists; this difference was in part due to the fact that the missionary aim was definitely encouraged by the home government in France. From the outset, then, poverty, paucity of numbers, gallantry, and missionary zeal formed marked features of the French North American colonies.

In other respects they very clearly reproduced some of the features of the motherland. Their organisation was strictly feudal in character. The real unit of settlement and government was

the *seigneurie*, an estate owned by a Frenchman of birth, and cultivated by his vassals, who found refuge from an Indian raid, or other danger, in the stockaded house which took the place of a *château*, much as their remote ancestors had taken refuge from the raids of the Northmen in the castles of their seigneur's ancestors. And over this feudal society was set, as in France, a highly centralised government wielding despotic power, and in its turn absolutely subject to the mandate of the Crown at home. This despotic government had the right to require the services of all its subjects in case of need; and it was only the centralised government of the colony, and the warlike and adventurous character of its small feudalised society, which enabled it to hold its own for so long against the superior numbers but laxer organisation of its English neighbours. A despotic central power, a feudal organisation, and an entire dependence upon the will of the King of France and upon his support, form, therefore, the second group of characteristics which marked the French colonies. They were colonies in the strictest sense, all the more because they reproduced the main features of the home system.

Nothing could have differed more profoundly from this system than the methods which the English were contemporaneously applying, without plan or clearly defined aim, and guided only by immediate practical needs, and by the rooted traditions of a self-governing people. Their enter-

prises received from the home government little direct assistance, but they throve better without it; and if there was little assistance, there was also little interference. In the East the English East India Company had to yield to the Dutch the monopoly of the Malayan trade, and bitterly complained of the lack of government support; but it succeeded in establishing several modest factories on the coast of India, and was on the whole prosperous. But it was in the West that the distinctive work of the English was achieved during this period, by the establishment of a series of colonies unlike any other European settlements which had yet been instituted. Their distinctive feature was self-government, to which they owed their steadily increasing prosperity. No other European colonies were thus managed on the principle of autonomy. Indeed, these English settlements were in 1650 the only self-governing lands in the world, apart from England herself, the United Provinces, and Switzerland.

The first English colony, Virginia, was planted in 1608 by a trading company organised for the purpose, whose subscribers included nearly all the London City Companies, and about seven hundred private individuals of all ranks. Their motives were partly political (' to put a bit in the ancient enemy's (Spain's) mouth '), and partly commercial, for they hoped to find gold, and to render England independent of the marine supplies which came from the Baltic. But profit was not their sole aim; they were moved also by

the desire to plant a new England beyond the seas. They made, in fact, no profits; but they did create a branch of the English stock, and the young squires' and yeomen's sons who formed the backbone of the colony showed themselves to be Englishmen by their unwillingness to submit to an uncontrolled direction of their affairs. In 1619, acting on instructions received from England, the company's governor summoned an assembly of representatives, one from each township, to consult on the needs of the colony. This was the first representative body that had ever existed outside Europe, and it indicated what was to be the character of English colonisation. Henceforth the normal English method of governing a colony was through a governor and an executive council appointed by the Crown or its delegate, and a representative assembly, which wielded full control over local legislation and taxation. 'Our present happiness,' said the Virginian Assembly in 1640, 'is exemplified by the freedom of annual assemblies and by legal trials by juries in all civil and criminal causes.'

The second group of English colonies, those of New England, far to the north of Virginia, reproduced in an intensified form this note of self-government. Founded in the years following 1620, these settlements were the outcome of Puritan discontents in England. The commercial motive was altogether subsidiary in their establishment; they existed in order that the doctrine and discipline of Puritanism might find a home

where its ascendancy would be secure. It was indeed under the guise of a commercial company that the chief of these settlements was made, but the company was organised as a means of safeguarding the colonists from Crown interference, and at an early date its headquarters were transferred to New England itself. Far from desiring to restrict this freedom, the Crown up to a point encouraged it. Winthrop, one of the leading colonists, tells us that he had learnt from members of the Privy Council 'that his Majesty did not intend to impose the ceremonies of the Church of England upon us; for that it was considered that it was the freedom from such things that made people come over to us.' The contrast between this licence and the rigid orthodoxy enforced upon French Canada or Spanish America is very instructive. It meant that the New World, so far as it was controlled by England, was to be open as a place of refuge for those who disliked the restrictions thought necessary at home. The same note is to be found in the colony of Maryland, planted by the Roman Catholic Lord Baltimore in 1632, largely as a place of refuge for his co-religionists. He was encouraged by the government of Charles I. in this idea, and the second Lord Baltimore reports that his father 'had absolute liberty to carry over any from his Majesty's Dominions willing to go. But he found very few but such as . . . could not conform to the laws of England relating to religion. These declared themselves willing to plant in this

province, if they might have a general toleration settled by law.' Maryland, therefore, became the first place in the world of Western civilisation in which full religious toleration was allowed; for the aim of the New Englanders was not religious freedom, but a free field for the rigid enforcement of their own shade of orthodoxy.

Thus, in these first English settlements, the deliberate encouragement of varieties of type was from the outset a distinguishing note, and the home authorities neither desired nor attempted to impose a strict uniformity with the rules and methods existing in England. There was as great a variety in social and economic organisation as in religious beliefs between the aristocratic planter colonies of the south and the democratic agricultural settlements of New England. In one thing only was there uniformity: every settlement possessed self-governing institutions, and prized them beyond all other privileges. None, indeed, carried self-government to so great an extent as the New Englanders. They came out organised as religious congregations, in which every member possessed equal rights, and they took the congregational system as the basis of their local government, and church membership as the test of citizenship; nor did any other colonies attain the right, long exercised by the New Englanders, of electing their own governors. But there was no English settlement, not even the little slave-worked plantations in the West Indian islands, like Barbados, which did not set up, as a matter

of course, a representative body to deal with problems of legislation and taxation, and the home government never dreamt of interfering with this practice. Already in 1650, the English empire was sharply differentiated from the Spanish, the Dutch, and the French empires by the fact that it consisted of a scattered group of self-governing communities, varying widely in type, but united especially by the common possession of free institutions, and thriving very largely because these institutions enabled local needs to be duly considered and attracted settlers of many types.

(*b*) *The Period of Systematic Colonial Policy*, 1660-1713

The second half of the seventeenth century was a period of systematic imperial policy on the part of both England and France; for both countries now realised that in the profitable field of commerce, at any rate, the Dutch had won a great advantage over them.

France, after many internal troubles and many foreign wars, had at last achieved, under the government of Louis XIV., the boon of firmly established order. She was now beyond all rivalry the greatest of the European states, and her king and his great finance minister, Colbert, resolved to win for her also supremacy in trade and colonisation. But this was to be done absolutely under the control and direction of

the central government. Until the establishment of the German Empire, there has never been so marked an instance of the centralised organisation of the whole national activity as France presented in this period. The French East India Company was revived under government direction, and began for the first time to be a serious competitor for Indian trade. An attempt was made to conquer Madagascar as a useful base for Eastern enterprises. The sugar industry in the French West Indian islands was scientifically encouraged and developed, though the full results of this work were not apparent until the next century. France began to take an active share in the West African trade in slaves and other commodities. In Canada a new era of prosperity began; the population was rapidly increased by the dispatch of carefully selected parties of emigrants, and the French activity in missionary work and in exploration became bolder than ever. Père Marquette and the Sieur de la Salle traced out the courses of the Ohio and the Mississippi; French trading-stations began to arise among the scattered Indian tribes who alone occupied the vast central plain; and a strong French claim was established to the possession of this vital area, which was not only the most valuable part of the American continent, but would have shut off the English coastal settlements from any possibility of westward expansion. These remarkable explorations led, in 1717, to the foundation of New Orleans at the

mouth of the great river, and the organisation of the colony of Louisiana. But the whole of the intense and systematic imperial activity of the French during this period depended upon the support and direction of government; and when Colbert died in 1683, and soon afterwards all the resources of France were strained by the pressure of two great European wars, the rapid development which Colbert's zeal had brought about was checked for a generation. Centralised administration may produce remarkable immediate results, but it does not encourage natural and steady growth.

Meanwhile the English had awakened to the fact that England had, almost by a series of accidents, become the centre of an empire, and to the necessity of giving to this empire some sort of systematic organisation. It was the statesmen of the Commonwealth who first began to grope after an imperial system. The aspect of the situation which most impressed them was that the enterprising Dutch were reaping most of the trading profits which arose from the creation of the English colonies: it was said that ten Dutch ships called at Barbados for every English ship. To deal with this they passed the Navigation Act of 1651, which provided that the trade of England and the colonies should be carried only in English or colonial ships. They thus gave a logical expression to the policy of imperial trade monopoly which had been in the minds of those who were interested in colonial questions from the outset; and they also opened a period of acute trade

rivalry and war with the Dutch. The first of the Dutch wars, which was waged by the Commonwealth, was a very even struggle, but it secured the success of the Navigation Act. Cromwell, though he hastened to make peace with the Dutch, was a still stronger imperialist than his parliamentary predecessors; he may justly be described as the first of the Jingoes. He demanded compensation from the Dutch for the half-forgotten outrage of Amboyna in 1623. He made a quite unprovoked attack upon the Spanish island of Hispaniola, and though he failed to conquer it, gained a compensation in the seizure of Jamaica (1655). And he insisted upon the obedience of the colonies to the home government with a severity never earlier shown. With him imperial aims may be said to have become, for the first time, one of the ruling ends of the English government.

But it was the reign of Charles II. which saw the definite organisation of a clearly conceived imperial policy; in the history of English imperialism there are few periods more important. The chief statesmen and courtiers of the reign, Prince Rupert, Clarendon, Shaftesbury, Albemarle, were all enthusiasts for the imperial idea. They had a special committee of the Privy Council for Trade and Plantations,[1] and appointed John Locke, the ablest political thinker of the age, to be its secretary. They pushed home the struggle against the maritime ascendancy

[1] It was not till 1696, however, that this Board became permanent.

of the Dutch, and fought two Dutch wars; and though the history-books, influenced by the Whig prejudice against Charles II., always treat these wars as humiliating and disgraceful, while they treat the Dutch war of the Commonwealth as just and glorious, the plain fact is that the first Dutch war of Charles II. led to the conquest of the Dutch North American colony of the New Netherlands (1667), and so bridged the gap between the New England and the southern colonies. They engaged in systematic colonisation, founding the new colony of Carolina to the south of Virginia, while out of their Dutch conquests they organised the colonies of New York, New Jersey, and Delaware; and the end of the reign saw the establishment of the interesting and admirably managed Quaker colony of Pennsylvania. They started the Hudson Bay Company, which engaged in the trade in furs to the north of the French colonies. They systematically encouraged the East India Company, which now began to be more prosperous than at any earlier period, and obtained in Bombay its first territorial possession in India.

More important, they worked out a new colonial policy, which was to remain, in its main features, the accepted British policy down to the loss of the American colonies in 1782. The theory at the base of this policy was that while the mother-country must be responsible for the defence of all the scattered settlements, which in their weakness were exposed to attack from many sides, in

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return she might reasonably expect to be put in possession of definite trade advantages. Hence the Navigation Act of 1660 provided not only that inter-imperial trade should be carried in English or colonial vessels, but that certain 'enumerated articles,' including some of the most important colonial products, should be sent only to England, so that English merchants should have the profits of selling them to other countries, and the English government the proceeds of duties upon them; and another Act provided that imports to the colonies should only come from, or through, England. In other words, England was to be the commercial *entrepôt* of the whole empire; and the regulation of imperial trade as a whole was to belong to the English government and parliament. To the English government also must necessarily fall the conduct of the relations of the empire as a whole with other powers. This commercial system was not, however, purely one-sided. If the colonies were to send their chief products only to England, they were at the same time to have a monopoly, or a marked advantage, in English markets. Tobacco-growing had been for a time a promising industry in England; it was prohibited in order that it might not compete with the colonial product; and differential duties were levied on the competing products of other countries and their colonies. In short, the new policy was one of Imperial Preference; it aimed at turning the empire into an economic unit, of which England

should be the administrative and distributing centre. So far the English policy did not differ in kind from the contemporary colonial policy of other countries, though it left to the colonies a greater freedom of trade (for example, in the 'non-enumerated articles') than was ever allowed by Spain or France, or by the two great trading companies which controlled the foreign possessions of Holland.

But there is one respect in which the authors of this system differed very widely from the colonial statesmen of other countries. Though they were anxious to organise and consolidate the empire on the basis of a trade system, they had no desire or intention of altering its self-governing character, or of discouraging the growth of a healthy diversity of type and method. Every one of the new colonies of this period was provided with the accustomed machinery of representative government: in the case of Carolina, the philosopher, John Locke, was invited to draw up a model constitution, and although his scheme was quite unworkable, the fact that he was asked to make it affords a striking proof of the seriousness with which the problems of colonial government were regarded. In several of the West Indian settlements self-governing institutions were organised during these years. In the Frame of Government which Penn set forth on the foundation of Pennsylvania, in 1682, he laid it down that 'any government is free where the laws rule, and where the people are a party to these

rules,' and on this basis proceeded to organise his system. According to this definition all the English colonies were free, and they were almost the only free communities in the world. And though it is true that there was an almost unceasing conflict between the government and the New England colonies, no one who studies the story of these quarrels can fail to see that the demands of the New Englanders were often unreasonable and inconsistent with the maintenance of imperial unity, while the home government was extremely patient and moderate. Above all, almost the most marked feature of the colonial policy of Charles II. was the uniform insistence upon complete religious toleration in the colonies. Every new charter contained a clause securing this vital condition.

It has long been our habit to condemn the old colonial system as it was defined in this period, and to attribute to it the disruption of the empire in the eighteenth century. But the judgment is not a fair one; it is due to those Whig prejudices by which so much of the modern history of England has been distorted. The colonial policy of Shaftesbury and his colleagues was incomparably more enlightened than that of any contemporary government. It was an interesting experiment—the first, perhaps, in modern history—in the reconciliation of unity and freedom. And it was undeniably successful: under it the English colonies grew and throve in a very striking way. Everything, indeed, goes to show that this

system was well designed for the needs of a group of colonies which were still in a state of weakness, still gravely under-peopled and undeveloped. Evil results only began to show themselves in the next age, when the colonies were growing stronger and more independent, and when the self-complacent Whigs, instead of revising the system to meet new conditions, actually enlarged and emphasised its most objectionable features.

(c) *The Conflict of French and English*, 1713-1763

While France and England were defining and developing their sharply contrasted imperial systems, the Dutch had fallen into the background, content with the rich dominion which they had already acquired; and the Spanish and Portuguese empires had both fallen into stagnation. New competitors, indeed, now began to press into the field: the wildly exaggerated notions of the wealth to be made from colonial ventures which led to the frenzied speculations of the early eighteenth century, John Law's schemes, and the South Sea Bubble, induced other powers to try to obtain a share of this wealth; and Austria, Brandenburg, and Denmark made fitful endeavours to become colonising powers. But the enterprises of these states were never of serious importance. The future of the non-European world seemed to depend mainly upon France and England; and it was yet to be determined which of the two systems, centralised autocracy enforcing uniformity, or self-

government encouraging variety of type, would prove the more successful and would play the greater part. Two bodies of ideas so sharply contrasted were bound to come into conflict. In the two great wars between England and Louis XIV. (1688-1713), though the questions at issue were primarily European, the conflict inevitably spread to the colonial field; and in the result France was forced to cede in 1713 the province of Acadia (which had twice before been in English hands), the vast basin of Hudson's Bay, and the island of Newfoundland, to which the fishermen of both nations had resorted, though the English had always claimed it. But these were only preliminaries, and the main conflict was fought out during the half-century following the Peace of Utrecht, 1713-63.

During this half-century Britain was under the rule of the Whig oligarchy, which had no clearly conceived ideas on imperial policy. Under the influence of the mercantile class the Whigs increased the severity of the restrictions on colonial trade, and prohibited the rise of industries likely to compete with those of the mother-country. But under the influence of laziness and timidity, and of the desire *quieta non movere*, they made no attempt seriously to enforce either the new or the old restrictions, and in these circumstances smuggling trade between the New England colonies and the French West Indies, in defiance of the Navigation Act and its companions, grew to such dimensions that any serious interference with it

would be felt as a real grievance. The Whigs and their friends later took credit for their neglect. George Grenville, they said, lost the colonies because he read the American dispatches; he would have done much better to leave the dispatches and the colonies alone. But this is a damning apology. If the old colonial system, whose severity, on paper, the Whigs had greatly increased, was no longer workable, it should have been revised; but no Whig showed any sign of a sense that change was necessary. Yet the prevalence of smuggling was not the only proof of the need for change. There was during the period a long succession of disputes between colonial governors and their assemblies, which showed that the restrictions upon their political freedom, as well as those upon their economic freedom, were beginning to irk the colonists; and that self-government was following its universal and inevitable course, and demanding its own fulfilment. But the Whigs made no sort of attempt to consider the question whether the self-government of the colonies could be increased without impairing the unity of the empire. The single device of their statesmanship was—not to read the dispatches. And, in the meanwhile, no evil results followed, because the loyalty of the colonists was ensured by the imminence of the French danger. The mother-country was still responsible for the provision of defence, though she was largely cheated of the commercial advantages which were to have been its recompense.

After 1713 there was a comparatively long interval of peace between Britain and France, but it was occupied by an acute commercial rivalry, in which, on the whole, the French seemed to be getting the upper hand. Their sugar islands in the West Indies were more productive than the British; their traders were rapidly increasing their hold over the central plain of North America, to the alarm of the British colonists; their intrigues kept alive a perpetual unrest in the recently conquered province of Acadia; and away in India, under the spirited direction of François Dupleix, their East India Company became a more formidable competitor for the Indian trade than it had hitherto been. Hence the imperial problem presented itself to the statesmen of that generation as a problem of power rather than as a problem of organisation; and the intense rivalry with France dwarfed and obscured the need for a reconsideration of colonial relations. At length this rivalry flamed out into two wars. The first of these was fought, on both sides, in a strangely half-hearted and lackadaisical way. But in the second (the Seven Years' War, 1756-63) the British cause, after two years of disaster, fell under the confident and daring leadership of Pitt, which brought a series of unexampled successes. The French flag was almost swept from the seas. The French settlements in Canada were overrun and conquered. With the fall of Quebec it was determined that the system of self-government, and not that of autocracy, should control the

destinies of the North American continent; and Britain emerged in 1763 the supreme colonial power of the world. The problem of power had been settled in her favour; but the problem of organisation remained unsolved. It emerged in an acute and menacing form as soon as the war was over.

During the course of these two wars, and in the interval between them, an extraordinary series of events had opened a new scene for the rivalry of the two great imperial powers, and a new world began to be exposed to the influence of the political ideas of Europe. The vast and populous land of India, where the Europeans had hitherto been content to play the part of modest traders, under the protection and control of great native rulers, had suddenly been displayed as a field for the imperial ambitions of the European peoples. Ever since the first appearance of the Dutch, the English, and the French in these regions, Northern India had formed a consolidated empire ruled from Delhi by the great Mogul dynasty; the shadow of its power was also cast over the lesser princes of Southern India. But after 1709, and still more after 1739, the Mogul Empire collapsed, and the whole of India, north and south, rapidly fell into a condition of complete anarchy. A multitude of petty rulers, nominal satraps of the powerless Mogul, roving adventurers, or bands of Mahratta raiders, put an end to all order and security; and to protect themselves and maintain their trade the European traders must needs enlist consider-

able bodies of Indian troops. It had long been proved that a comparatively small number of troops, disciplined in the European fashion, could hold their own against the loose and disorderly mobs who followed the standards of Indian rulers. And it now occurred to the ambitious mind of the Frenchman Dupleix that it should be possible, by the use of this military superiority, to intervene with effect in the unceasing strife of the Indian princes, to turn the scale on one side or the other, and to obtain over the princes whose cause he embraced a commanding influence, which would enable him to secure the expulsion of his English rivals, and the establishment of a French trade monopoly based upon political influence.

This daring project was at first triumphantly successful. The English had to follow suit in self-defence, but could not equal the ability of Dupleix. In 1750 a French protégé occupied the most important throne of Southern India at Hyderabad, and was protected and kept loyal by a force of French sepoys under the Marquis de Bussy, whose expenses were met out of the revenues of large provinces (the Northern Sarkars) placed under French administration; while in the Carnatic, the coastal region where all the European traders had their south-eastern headquarters, a second French protégé had almost succeeded in crushing his rival, whom the English company supported. But the genius of Clive reversed the situation with dramatic swiftness; the French authorities at home, alarmed at these

dangerous adventures, repudiated and recalled Dupleix (1754), and the British power was left to apply the methods which he had invented. When the Seven Years' War broke out (1756), the French, repenting of their earlier decision, sent a substantial force to restore their lost influence in the Carnatic, but the result was complete failure. A British protégé henceforward ruled in the Carnatic; a British force replaced the French at Hyderabad; and the revenues of the Northern Sarkars, formerly assigned for the maintenance of the French force, were handed over to its successor.

Meanwhile in the rich province of Bengal a still more dramatic revolution had taken place. Attacked by the young Nawab, Siraj-uddaula, the British traders at Calcutta had been forced to evacuate that prosperous centre (1756). But Clive, coming up with a fleet and an army from Madras, applied the lessons he had learnt in the Carnatic, set up a rival claimant to the throne of Bengal, and at Plassey (1757) won for his puppet a complete victory. From 1757 onwards the British East India Company was the real master in Bengal, even more completely than in the Carnatic. It had not, in either region, conquered any territory; it had only supported successfully a claimant to the native throne. The native government, in theory, continued as before; the company, in theory, was its subject and vassal. But in practice these great and rich provinces lay at its mercy, and if it did not yet choose to undertake their government, this was

only because it preferred to devote itself to its original business of trade.

Thus by 1763 the British power had achieved a dazzling double triumph. It had destroyed the power of its chief rival both in the East and in the West. It had established the supremacy of the British peoples and of British methods of government throughout the whole continent of North America; and it had entered, blindly and without any conception of what the future was to bring forth, upon the path which was to lead to dominion over the vast continent of India, and upon the tremendous task of grafting the ideas of the West upon the East.

Such was the outcome of the first two periods in the history of European imperialism. It left Central and South America under the stagnant and reactionary government of Spain and Portugal; the eastern coast of North America under the control of groups of self-governing Englishmen; Canada, still inhabited by Frenchmen, under British dominance; Java and the Spice Islands, together with the small settlement of Cape Colony, in the hands of the Dutch; a medley of European settlements in the West Indian islands, and a string of European factories along the coast of West Africa; and the beginning of an anomalous British dominion established at two points on the coast of India. But of all the European nations which had taken part in this vast process of expansion, one alone, the British, still retained its vitality and its expansive power.

IV

THE ERA OF REVOLUTION, 1763-1825

'COLONIES are like fruits,' said Turgot, the eighteenth-century French economist and statesman: 'they cling to the mother-tree only until they are ripe.' This generalisation, which represented a view very widely held during that and the next age, seemed to be borne out in the most conclusive way by the events of the sixty years following the Seven Years' War. In 1763 the French had lost almost the whole of the empire which they had toilsomely built up during a century and a half. Within twenty years their triumphant British rivals were forced to recognise the independence of the American colonies, and thus lost the bulk of what may be called the first British Empire. They still retained the recently conquered province of French Canada, but it seemed unlikely that the French Canadians would long be content to live under an alien dominion: if they had not joined in the American Revolution, it was not because they loved the British, but because they hated the Americans. The French Revolutionary wars brought further changes. One result of these wars was that the Dutch lost Cape Colony, Ceylon, and Java,

though Java was restored to them in 1815. A second result was that when Napoleon made himself master of Spain in 1808, the Spanish colonies in Central and South America ceased to be governed from the mother-country; and having tasted the sweets of independence, and still more, the advantages of unrestricted trade, could never again be brought into subordination. By 1825 nothing was left of the vast Spanish Empire save the Canaries, Cuba, Porto Rico, and the Philippine Islands; nothing was left of the Portuguese Empire save a few decaying posts on the coasts of Africa and India; nothing was left of the Dutch Empire save Java and its dependencies, restored in 1815; nothing was left of the French Empire save a few West Indian islands; and what had been the British American colonies were now the United States, a great power declaring to Europe, through the mouth of President Monroe, that she would resist any attempt of the European powers to restore the old régime in South America. It appeared that the political control of European states over non-European regions must be short-lived and full of trouble; and that the influence of Europe upon the non-European world would henceforth be exercised mainly through new independent states imbued with European ideas. Imperial aspirations thus seemed to that and the next generation at once futile and costly.

Of all these colonial revolutions the most striking was that which tore away the American

colonies from Britain (1764-82); not only because it led to the creation of one of the great powers of the world, and was to afford the single instance which has yet arisen of a daughter-nation outnumbering its mother-country, but still more because it seemed to prove that not even the grant of extensive powers of self-government would secure the permanent loyalty of colonies. Indeed, from the standpoint of *Realpolitik*, it might be argued that in the case of America self-government was shown to be a dangerous gift; for the American colonies, which alone among European settlements had obtained this supreme endowment, were the first, and indeed the only, European settlements to throw off deliberately their connection with the mother-country. France and Holland lost their colonies by war, and even the Spanish colonies would probably never have thought of severing their relations with Spain but for the anomalous conditions created by the Napoleonic conquest.

The American Revolution is, then, an event unique at once in its causes, its character, and its consequences; and it throws a most important illumination upon some of the problems of imperialism. It cannot be pretended that the revolt of the colonists was due to oppression or to serious misgovernment. The paltry taxes which were its immediate provoking cause would have formed a quite negligible burden upon a very prosperous population; they were to have been spent exclusively within the colonies themselves, and

would have been mainly used to meet a part of the cost of colonial defence, the bulk of which was still to be borne by the mother-country. If the colonists had been willing to suggest any other means of raising the required funds, their suggestions would have been readily accepted. This was made plain at several stages in the course of the discussion, but the invitation to suggest alternative methods of raising money met with no response. The plain fact is that Britain, already heavily loaded with debt, was bearing practically the whole burden of colonial defence, and was much less able than the colonies themselves to endure the strain. As for the long-established restrictions on colonial trade, which in fact though not in form contributed as largely as the proposals of direct taxation to cause the revolt, they were far less severe, even if they had been strictly enforced, than the restrictions imposed upon the trade of other European settlements.

It is equally misleading to attribute the blame of the revolt wholly to George III. and the ministers by whom he was served during the critical years. No doubt it is possible to imagine a more tactful man than George Grenville, a more far-seeing and courageous statesman than Lord North, a less obstinate prince than George III. himself. But it may be doubted whether any change of men would have done more than postpone the inevitable. The great Whig apologists who have dictated the accepted view of British

history in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries have laboured to create the impression that if only Burke, Chatham, and Charles Fox had had the handling of the issue, the tragedy of disruption would have been avoided. But there is no evidence that any of these men, except perhaps Burke, appreciated the magnitude and difficulty of the questions that had been inevitably raised in 1764, and must have been raised whoever had been in power; or that they would have been able to suggest a workable new scheme of colonial government which would have met the difficulty. If they had put forward such a scheme, it would have been wrecked on the resistance of British opinion, which was still dominated by the theories and traditions of the old colonial system; and even if it had overcome this obstacle, it would very likely have been ruined by the captious and litigious spirit to which events had given birth among the colonists, especially in New England.

The root of the matter was that the old colonial system, which had suited well enough the needs of the colonies as they were when it was devised by the statesmen of Charles II.'s reign, was no longer suitable to their condition now that they had become great and prosperous communities of freemen. They enjoyed self-government on a scale more generous than any other communities in the world outside of Britain; indeed, in one sense they enjoyed it on a more generous scale than Britain herself, since political rights were much more widely exercised in the colonies, owing

to the natural conditions of a new and prosperous land, than they were to be, or could be, in Britain until nearly a century later. No direct taxation had as yet been imposed upon them without their own consent. They made the laws by which their own lives were regulated. They were called upon to pay no tribute to the home government, except the very indirect levy on goods passing through England to or from their ports, and this was nearly balanced by the advantages which they enjoyed in the British market, and far more than balanced by the protection afforded to them by the British fleet. They were not even required to raise troops for the defence of their own frontiers except of their own free will, and the main burden of defending even their landward frontier was borne by the mother-country. But being British they had the instinct of self-government in their blood and bones, and they found that the control of their own affairs was qualified or limited in two principal ways.

In the first place, the executive and judicial officers who carried out the laws were not appointed by them but by the Crown in England: the colonies were not *responsible* for the administration of their own laws. In the second place, the regulations by which their foreign trade was governed were determined, not by themselves, but by the British parliament: they were not *responsible* for the control of their own traffic with the outside world. It is true that the salaries of the executive officials and the judges depended

upon their grant, and that any governor who acted in the teeth of colonial opinion would find his position quite untenable, so that the colonists exercised a real if indirect control over administration. It is true also that they accepted the general principles of the commercial system, and had reaped great benefits from it.

But it is the unfailing instinct of the citizens in a self-governing community to be dissatisfied unless they feel that they have a full and equal share in the control of their own destinies. Denied responsibility, they are apt to become irresponsible; and when all allowance has been made for the stupidities of governors and for the mistakes of the home authorities, it must be recognised that the thirteen American colonial legislatures often behaved in a very irresponsible way, and were extremely difficult to handle. They refused to vote fixed salaries to their judges in order to make their power felt, simply because the judges were appointed by the Crown, although in doing so they were dangerously undermining judicial independence. They refused in many cases to supply anything like adequate contingents for the war against the French and their Indian allies, partly because each legislature was afraid of being more generous than the others, partly because they could trust to the home government to make good their deficiencies. Yet at the same time they did nothing to check, but rather encouraged, the wholesale smuggling by which the trade regulations were reduced to a

nullity, though these regulations were not only accepted in principle by themselves, but afforded the only compensation to the mother-country for the cost of colonial defence. It is as unscientific to blame the colonists and their legislatures for this kind of action, as it is to blame the British statesmen for their proposals. It was the almost inevitable result of the conditions among a free, prosperous, and extremely self-confident people; it was, indeed, the proof that in this young people the greatest political ideal of western civilisation, the ideal of self-government, had taken firm root. The denial of responsibility was producing irresponsibility; and even if the Stamp Act and the Tea Duties had never been proposed, this state of things was bound to lead to increasing friction. Nor must it be forgotten that this friction was accentuated by the contrast between the democratic conditions of colonial life, and the aristocratic organisation of English society.

It ought to have been obvious, long before Grenville initiated his new policy in 1764, that the colonial system was not working well; and the one circumstance which had prevented serious conflict was the danger which threatened the colonists in the aggressive attitude of the French to the north and west. Since the individual colonies refused to raise adequate forces for their own defence, or to co-operate with one another in a common scheme, they were dependent for their security upon the mother-country. But as soon as the danger was removed, as it was in 1763,

this reason for restraint vanished; and although the great majority of the colonists were quite sincerely desirous of retaining their membership of the British commonwealth, the conditions would inevitably have produced a state of intensifying friction, unless the whole colonial system had been drastically reconstructed.

Reconstruction was therefore inevitable in 1764. The Whig policy of simply ignoring the issue and 'not reading the dispatches' could no longer be pursued; it was indeed largely responsible for the mischief. George III. and Grenville deserve the credit of seeing this. But their scheme of reconstruction not unnaturally amounted to little more than a tightening-up of the old system. The trade laws were to be more strictly enforced. The governors and the judges were to be made more independent of the assemblies by being given fixed salaries. The colonists were to bear a larger share of the cost of defence, which fell so unfairly on the mother-country. If the necessary funds could be raised by means approved by the colonists themselves, well and good; but if not, then they must be raised by the authority of the imperial parliament. For the existing system manifestly could not continue indefinitely, and it was better to have the issue clearly raised, even at the risk of conflict, than to go on merely drifting.

When the colonists (without suggesting any alternative proposals) contented themselves with repudiating the right of parliament to tax them,

and proceeded to outrageous insults to the king's authority, and the most open defiance of the trade regulations, indignation grew in Britain. It seemed, to the average Englishman, that the colonists proposed to leave every public burden, even the cost of judges' salaries, on the shoulders of the mother-country, already loaded with a debt which had been largely incurred in defence of the colonies; but to disregard every obligation imposed upon themselves. A system whereunder the colony has all rights and no enforcible duties, the mother-country all duties and no enforcible rights, obviously could not work. That was the system which, in the view of the gentlemen of England, the colonists were bent upon establishing; and, taking this view, they cannot be blamed for refusing to accept such a conclusion. There was no one, either in Britain or in America, capable of grasping the essentials of the problem, which were that, once established, self-government inevitably strives after its own fulfilment; that these British settlers, in whom the British tradition of self-government had been strengthened by the freedom of a new land, would never be content until they enjoyed a full share in the control of their own affairs; and that although they seemed, even to themselves, to be fighting about legal minutiæ, about the difference between internal and external duties, about the legality of writs of assistance, and so forth, the real issue was the deeper one of the fulfilment of self-government.

Could fully responsible self-government be

reconciled with imperial unity? Could any means be devised whereby the units in a fellowship of free states might retain full control over their own affairs, and at the same time effectively combine for common purposes? That was and is the ultimate problem of British imperial organisation, as it was and is the ultimate problem of international relations. But the problem, though it now presented itself in a comparatively simple form, was never fairly faced on either side of the Atlantic. For the mother and her daughters too quickly reached the point of arguing about their legal rights against one another, and when friends begin to argue about their legal rights, the breach of their friendship is at hand. So the dreary argument, which lasted for eleven years (1764-75), led to the still more dreary war, which lasted for seven years (1775-82); and the only family of free self-governing communities existing in the world was broken up in bitterness. This was indeed a tragedy. For if the great partnership of freedom could have been reorganised on conditions that would have enabled it to hold together, the cause of liberty in the world would have been made infinitely more secure.

The Revolution gave to the Americans the glory of establishing the first fully democratic system of government on a national scale that had yet existed in the world, and of demonstrating that by the machinery of self-government a number of distinct and jealous communities could be united for common purposes. The new American Com-

monwealth became an inspiration for eager Liberals in the old world as well as in the new, and its successful establishment formed the strongest of arguments for the democratic idea in all lands. Unhappily the pride of this great achievement helped to persuade the Americans that they were different from the rest of the world, and unaffected by its fortunes. They were apt to think of themselves as the inventors and monopolists of political liberty. Cut off by a vast stretch of ocean from the Old World, and having lost that contact with its affairs which the relation with Britain had hitherto maintained, they followed but dimly, and without much comprehension, the obscure and complex struggles wherein the spirit of liberty was working out a new Europe, in the face of difficulties vastly greater than any with which the Americans had ever had to contend. They had been alienated from Britain, the one great free state of Europe, and had been persuaded by their reading of their own experience that she was a tyrant-power; and they thus found it hard to recognise her for what, with all her faults, she genuinely was—the mother of free institutions in the modern world, the founder and shaper of their own prized liberties. All these things combined to persuade the great new republic that she not only might, but ought to, stand aloof from the political problems of the rest of the world, and take no interest in its concerns. This attitude, the natural product of the conditions, was to last for more than a century, and was

to weaken greatly the cause of liberty in the world.

Although the most obvious features of the half-century following the great British triumph of 1763 were the revolt of the American colonies and the apparently universal collapse of the imperialist ambitions of the European nations, a more deeply impressive feature of the period was that, in spite of the tragedy and humiliation of the great disruption, the imperial impetus continued to work potently in Britain, alone among the European nations; and to such effect that at the end of the period she found herself in control of a new empire more extensive than that which she had lost, and far more various in its character. Having failed to solve one great imperial problem, she promptly addressed herself to a whole series of others even more difficult, and for these she was to find more hopeful solutions.

When the American revolt began, the Canadian colonies to the north were in an insecure and unorganised state. On the coast, in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, there was a small British population; but the riverine colony of Canada proper, with its centre at Quebec, was still purely French, and was ruled by martial law. Accustomed to a despotic system, and not yet reconciled to the British supremacy, the French settlers were obviously unready for self-government. But the Quebec Act of 1774, by securing the maintenance of the Roman Catholic religion and of French civil law, ensured the loyalty of the

French; and this Act is also noteworthy as the first formal expression of willingness to admit or even welcome the existence, within the hospitable limits of the Empire, of a variety of types of civilisation. In the new British Empire there was to be no uniformity of *Kultur*.

The close of the American struggle, however, brought a new problem. Many thousands of exiles from the revolting colonies, willing to sacrifice everything in order to retain their British citizenship, poured over the borders into the Canadian lands. They settled for the first time the rich province of Ontario, greatly increased the population of Nova Scotia, and started the settlement of New Brunswick. To these exiles Britain felt that she owed much, and, despite her own financial distress, expended large sums in providing them with the means to make a good beginning in their new homes. But it was impossible to deny these British settlers, and the emigrants from Britain who soon began to join them, the rights of self-government, to which they were accustomed. Their advent, however, in a hitherto French province, raised the very difficult problem of racial relationship. They might have been used as a means for Anglicising the earlier French settlers and for forcing them into a British mould; it may fairly be said that most European governments would have used them in this way, and many of the settlers would willingly have fallen in with such a programme. But that would have been out of accord with

the genius of the British system, which believes in freedom and variety. Accordingly, by the Act of 1791, the purely French region of Quebec or Lower Canada was separated from the British region of Ontario or Upper Canada, and both districts, as well as the coastal settlements, were endowed with self-governing institutions of the familiar pattern—an elected assembly controlling legislation and taxation, a nominated governor and council directing the executive. Thus within eighteen years of their conquest the French colonists were introduced to self-government. And within nine years of the loss of the American colonies, a new group of self-governing American colonies had been organised. They were sufficiently content with the system to resist with vigour and success an American invasion in 1812.

While the American controversy was proceeding, one of the greatest of British navigators, Captain Cook, was busy with his remarkable explorations. He was the first to survey the archipelagoes of the Pacific; more important, he was the real discoverer of Australia and New Zealand; for though the Dutch explorers had found these lands more than a century earlier, they had never troubled to complete their explorations. Thus a vast new field, eminently suitable for European settlement, was placed at the disposal of Britain. It was utilised with extraordinary promptitude. The loss of the American colonies had deprived Britain of her chief dumping-ground for convicts. In 1788, six

years after the recognition of their independence, she decided to use the new continent for this purpose, and the penal settlement of Botany Bay began (under unfavourable auspices) the colonisation of Australia.

But the most important, and the most amazing, achievement of Britain in this period was the establishment and extension of her empire in India, and the planting within it of the first great gift of Western civilisation, the sovereignty of a just and impartial law. This was a novel and a very difficult task, such as no European people had yet undertaken ; and it is not surprising that there should have been a period of bewildered misgovernment before it was achieved. That it should have been achieved at all is one of the greatest miracles of European imperialism.

By 1763 the East India Company had established a controlling influence over the Nawabs of two important regions, Bengal and the Carnatic, and had shown, in a series of struggles, that its control was not to be shaken off. But the company had not annexed any territory, or assumed any responsibility for the government of these rich provinces. Its agents in the East, who were too far from London to be effectively controlled, enjoyed power without responsibility. They were privileged traders, upon whom the native governments dared not impose restrictions, and (as any body of average men would have done under similar circumstances) they gravely abused their position to build up huge

fortunes for themselves. During the fifteen years following the battle of Plassey (1757) there is no denying that the political power of the British in India was a mere curse to the native population, and led to the complete disorganisation of the already decrepit native system of government in the provinces affected. It was vain for the directors at home to scold their servants. There were only two ways out of the difficulty. One was that the company should abandon India, which was not to be expected. The other was that, possessing power, of which it was now impossible to strip themselves, they should assume the responsibility for its exercise, and create for their subjects a just and efficient system of government. But the company would not see this. They had never desired political power, but had drifted into the possession of it in spite of themselves. They honestly disliked the idea of establishing by force an alien domination over subject peoples, and this feeling was yet more strongly held by the most influential political circles in England. The company desired nothing but trade. Their business was that of traders, and they wanted only to be left free to mind their business. So the evils arising from power without responsibility continued, and half-hearted attempts to amend them in 1765 and in 1769 only made the conditions worse. The events of the years from 1757 to 1772 showed that when the superior organisation of the West came in contact with the East, mere trading exploitation led to even worse results

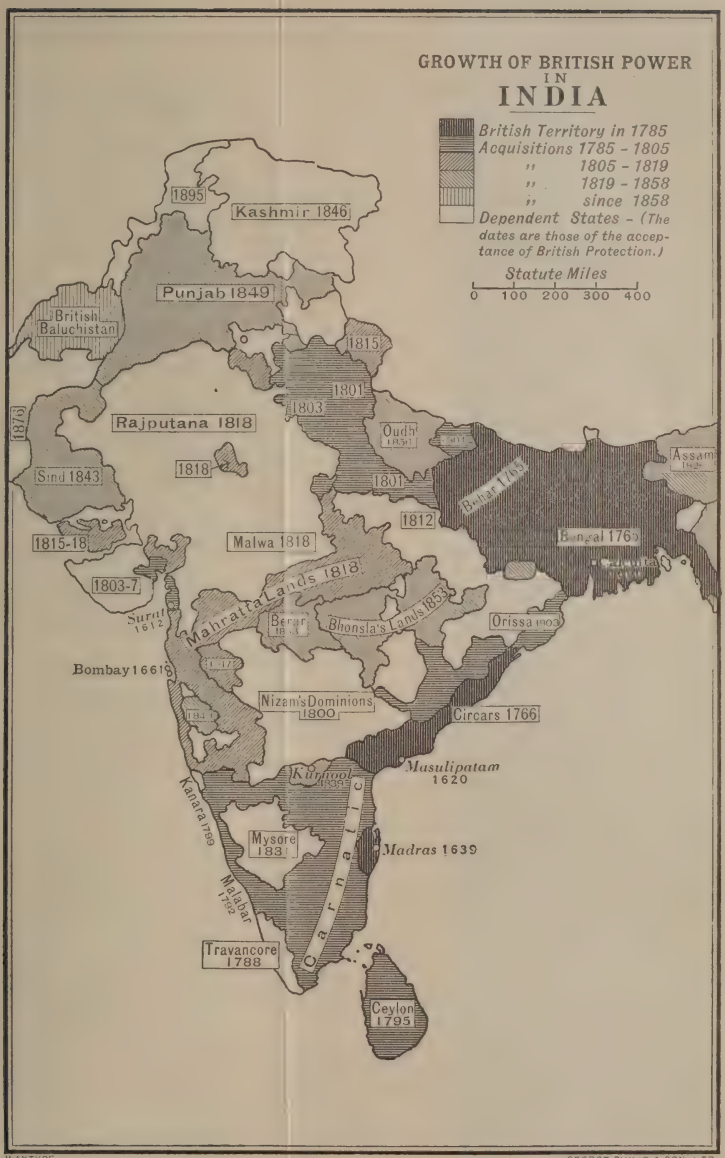
than a forcibly imposed dominion; and the only solution lay in the wise adaptation of western methods of government to eastern conditions.

Thus Britain found herself faced with an imperial problem of apparently insuperable difficulty, which reached its most acute stage just at the time when the American trouble was at its height. The British parliament and government intervened, and in 1773 for the first time assumed some responsibility for the affairs of the East India Company. But they did not understand the Indian problem—how, indeed, should they?—and their first solution was a failure. By a happy fortune, however, the East India Company had conferred the governorship of Bengal (1772) upon the greatest Englishman of the eighteenth century, Warren Hastings. Hastings pensioned off the Nawab, took over direct responsibility for the government of Bengal, and organised a system of justice which, though far from perfect, established for the first time the Reign of Law in an Indian realm. His firm and straightforward dealings with the other Indian powers still further strengthened the position of the company; and when in the midst of the American war, at a moment when no aid could be expected from Britain, a combination of the most formidable Indian powers, backed by a French fleet, threatened the downfall of the company's authority, Hastings' resourceful and inspiring leadership was equal to every emergency. He not only brought the company with heightened prestige out of the

war, but throughout its course no hostile army was ever allowed to cross the frontiers of Bengal. In the midst of the unceasing and desolating wars of India, the territories under direct British rule formed an island of secure peace and of justice. That was Hastings' supreme contribution: it was the foundation upon which arose the fabric of the Indian Empire. Hastings was not a great conqueror or annexer of territory; the only important acquisition made during his régime was effected, in defiance of his protests, by the hostile majority which for a time overrode him in his own council, and which condemned him for ambition. His work was to make the British rule mean security and justice in place of tyranny; and it was because it had come to mean this that it grew, after his time, with extraordinary rapidity.

It was not by the desire of the directors or the home government that it grew. They did everything in their power to check its growth, for they shrank from any increase to their responsibilities. They even prohibited by law all annexations, or the making of alliances with Indian powers.[1] But fate was too strong for them. Even a governor like Lord Cornwallis, a convinced supporter of the policy of non-expansion and non-intervention, found himself forced into war, and compelled to annex territories; because non-intervention was interpreted by the Indian powers as a confession of weakness and an in-

[1] India Act of 1784.



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vitation to attack. Non-intervention also gave openings to the French, who, since the outbreak of the Revolution, had revived their old Indian ambitions; and while Bonaparte was engaged in the conquest of Egypt as a half-way house to India (1797), French agents were busy building up a new combination of Indian powers against the company.

This formidable coalition was about to come to a head when, in 1798, there landed in India a second man of genius, sent by fate at the critical moment. In five years, by an amazing series of swiftly successful wars and brilliantly conceived treaties, the Marquess Wellesley broke the power of every member of the hostile coalitions, except two of the Mahratta princes. The area of British territory was quadrupled; the most important of the Indian princes became vassals of the company; and the Great Mogul of Delhi himself, powerless now, but always a symbol of the overlordship of India, passed under British protection. When Wellesley left India in 1805, the East India Company was already the paramount power in India south-east of the Sutlej and the Indus. The Mahratta princes, indeed, still retained a restricted independence, and for an interval the home authorities declined to permit any interference with them, even though they were manifestly giving protection to bands of armed raiders who terrorised and devastated territories which were under British protection. But the time came when the Mahrattas them-

selves broke the peace. Then their power also was broken; and in 1818 Britain stood forth as the sovereign ruler of India.

This was only sixty years after the battle of Plassey had established British influence, though not British rule, in a single province of India; only a little over thirty years after Warren Hastings returned to England, leaving behind him an empire still almost limited to that single province. There is nothing in history that can be compared with the swiftness of this achievement, which is all the more remarkable when we remember that almost every step in the advance was taken with extreme unwillingness. But the most impressive thing about this astounding fabric of power, which extended over an area equal to half of Europe and inhabited by perhaps one-sixth of the human race, was not the swiftness with which it was created, but the results which flowed from it. It had begun in corruption and oppression, but it had grown because it had come to stand for justice, order, and peace. In 1818 it could already be claimed for the British rule in India that it had brought to the numerous and conflicting races, religions, and castes of that vast and ancient land, three boons of the highest value: political unity such as they had never known before; security from the hitherto unceasing ravages of internal turbulence and war; and, above all, the supreme gift which the West had to offer to the East, the substitution of an unvarying Reign of Law for the capricious wills of

innumerable and shifting despots. This is an achievement unexampled in history, and it alone justified the imposition of the rule of the West over the East, which had at first seemed to produce nothing but evil. It took place during the age of Revolution, when the external empires of Europe were on all sides falling into ruin; and it passed at the time almost unregarded, because it was overshadowed by the drama of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars.

The construction of the Indian Empire would of itself suffice to make an age memorable, but it does not end the catalogue of the achievements of British imperialism in this tremendous period. As a result of the participation of Holland in the war on the side of France, the Dutch colony at the Cape of Good Hope was occupied by Britain. It was first occupied in 1798, restored for a brief period in 1801, reoccupied in 1806, and finally retained under the treaty settlement of 1815. The Cape was, in fact, the most important acquisition secured to Britain by that treaty; and it is worth noting that while the other great powers who had joined in the final overthrow of Napoleon helped themselves without hesitation to immense and valuable territories, Britain, which had alone maintained the struggle from beginning to end without flagging, actually paid the sum of £2,000,000 to Holland as a compensation for this thinly peopled settlement. She retained it mainly because of its value as a calling-station on the way to India. But it imposed upon

her an imperial problem of a very difficult kind. As in Canada, she had to deal here with an alien race of European origin and proud traditions; but this racial problem was accentuated by the further problem of dealing with a preponderant and growing negro population. How were justice, peace, liberty, and equality of rights to be established in such a field?

It was, then, an astonishing new empire which had grown up round Britain during the period when the world was becoming convinced that colonial empires were not worth acquiring, because they could not last. It was an empire of continents or sub-continents—Canada, Australia, India, South Africa—not to speak of innumerable scattered islands and trading-posts dotted over all the seas of the world, which had either survived from an earlier period, or been acquired in order that they might serve as naval bases. It was spread round the whole globe; it included almost every variety of soil, products, and climate; it was inhabited by peoples of the most varying types; it presented an infinite variety of political and racial problems. In 1825 this empire was the only extra-European empire of importance still controlled by any of the historic imperial powers of Western Europe. And at the opening of the nineteenth century, when extra-European empires seemed to have gone out of fashion, the greatest of all imperial questions was the question whether the political capacity of the British peoples, having failed to solve the comparatively

simple problem of finding a mode of organisation which could hold together communities so closely akin as those of America and the parent islands, would be capable of achieving any kind of effective organisation for this new astounding fabric, while at the same time securing to all its members that liberty and variety of development which in the case of America had only been fully secured at the cost of disruption.

V

EUROPE AND THE NON-EUROPEAN WORLD 1815-1878

When the European peoples settled down, in 1815, after the long wars of the French Revolution, they found themselves faced by many problems, but there were few Europeans who would have included among these problems the extension of Western civilisation over the as yet unsubjugated portions of the world. Men's hearts were set upon the organisation of permanent peace: that seemed the greatest of all questions, and, for a time, it appeared to have obtained a satisfactory solution with the organisation of the great League of Peace of 1815. But the peace was to be short-lived, because it was threatened by the emergence of a number of other problems of great complexity. First among these stood the problem of nationality: the increasingly clamorous demand of divided or subject peoples for unity and freedom. Alongside of this arose the sister-problem of liberalism: the demand raised from all sides, among peoples who had never known political liberty, for the institutions of self-government which had been proved practicable by the British peoples, and turned into the

object of a fervent belief by the preachings of the French. These two causes were to plunge Europe into many wars, and to vex and divide the peoples of every European country, throughout the period 1815-78. And to add to the complexity, there was growing in intensity during all these years the problem of Industrialism—the transformation of the very bases of life in all civilised communities, and the consequent development of wholly new, and terribly difficult, social issues. Preoccupied with all these questions, the statesmen and the peoples of most European states had no attention to spare for the non-European world. They neglected it all the more readily because the events of the preceding period seemed to demonstrate that colonial empires were not worth the cost and labour necessary for their attainment, since they seemed doomed to fall asunder as soon as they began to be valuable.

Yet the period 1815-78 was to see an extension of European civilisation in the non-European world more remarkable than that of any previous age. The main part in this extension was played by Britain, who found herself left free, without serious rivalry in any part of the globe, to expand and develop the extraordinary empire which she possessed in 1815, and to deal with the bewildering problems which it presented. So marked was the British predominance in colonial activity during this age that it has been called the age of British monopoly,

and so far as trans-oceanic activities were concerned, this phrase very nearly represents the truth. But there were other developments of the period almost as remarkable as the growth and reorganisation of the British Empire; and it will be convenient to survey these in the first instance before turning to the British achievement.

The place of honour, as always in any great story of European civilisation, belongs to France. Undeterred by the loss of her earlier empire, and unexhausted by the strain of the great ordeal through which she had just passed, France began in these years the creation of her second colonial empire, which was to be in many ways more splendid than the first. Within fifteen years of the fall of Napoleon, the French flag was flying in Algiers.

The northern coast of Africa, from the Gulf of Syrtis to the Atlantic, which has been in modern times divided into the three districts of Tunis, Algeria, and Morocco, forms essentially a single region, whose character is determined by the numerous chains of the Atlas Mountains. This region, shut off from the rest of Africa not only by the Atlas but by the most impassable of all geographical barriers, the great Sahara desert, really belongs to Europe rather than to the continent of which it forms a part. Its fertile valleys were once the homes of brilliant civilisations: they were the seat of the Carthaginian Empire, and at a later date they constituted one of the richest and most civilised provinces of the

Roman Empire. Their civilisation was wrecked by that barbarous German tribe, the Vandals, in the fifth century. It received only a partial and temporary revival after the Mahomedan conquest at the end of the seventh century, and since that date this once happy region has gradually lapsed into barbarism. During the modern age it was chiefly known as the home of ruthless and destructive pirates, whose chief headquarters were at Algiers, and who owned a merely nominal allegiance to the Sultan of Turkey. Ever since the time of Khair-ed-din Barbarossa, in the early sixteenth century, the powers of Europe have striven in vain to keep the Barbary corsairs in check. Charles v., Philip ii., Louis xiv. attacked them with only temporary success: they continued to terrorise the trade of the Mediterranean, to seize trading-ships, to pillage the shores of Spain and Italy, and to carry off thousands of Christians into a cruel slavery; Robinson Crusoe, it may be recalled, was one of their victims. The powers at Vienna endeavoured to concert action against them in 1815. They were attacked by a British fleet in 1816, and by a combined British and French fleet in 1819. But all such temporary measures were insufficient. The only cure for the ill was that the headquarters of the pirate chiefs should be conquered, and brought under civilised government.

This task France was rather reluctantly drawn into undertaking, as the result of a series of insults offered by the pirates to the French flag

between 1827 and 1830. At first the aim of the conquerors was merely to occupy and administer the few ports which formed the chief centres of piracy. But experience showed that this was futile, since it involved endless wars with the unruly clansmen of the interior. Gradually, therefore, the whole of Algeria was systematically conquered and organised. The process took nearly twenty years, and was not completed until 1848. In all the records of European imperialism there has been no conquest more completely justified both by the events which led up to it and by the results which have followed from it. Peace and Law reign throughout a country which had for centuries been given over to anarchy. The wild tribesmen are unlearning the habits of disorder, and being taught to accept the conditions of a civilised life. The great natural resources of the country are being developed as never since the days of Roman rule. No praise can be too high for the work of the French administrators who have achieved these results. And it is worth noting that, alone among the provinces conquered by the European peoples, Algeria has been actually incorporated in the mother-country; it is part of the French Republic, and its elected representatives sit in the French Parliament.

In the nature of things the conquest of Algeria could not stand alone. Algeria is separated by merely artificial lines from Tunis on the east and Morocco on the west, where the old conditions of anarchy still survived; and the establishment

of order and peace in the middle area of this single natural region was difficult, so long as the areas on either side remained in disorder and war. In 1844 France found it necessary to make war upon Morocco because of the support which it had afforded to a rebellious Algerian chief, and this episode illustrated the close connection of the two regions. But the troops were withdrawn as soon as the immediate purpose was served. France had not yet begun to think of extending her dominion over the areas to the east and west of Algeria. That was to be the work of the next period.

Further south in Africa, France retained, as a relic of her older empire, a few posts on the coast of West Africa, notably Senegal. From these her intrepid explorers and traders began to extend their influence, and the dream of a great French empire in Northern Africa began to attract French minds. But the realisation of this dream also belongs to the next period. In the Far East, too, this was a period of beginnings. Ever since 1787—before the Revolution—the French had possessed a foothold on the coast of Annam, from which French missionaries carried on their labours among the peoples of Indo-China. Maltreatment of these missionaries led to a war with Annam in 1858, and in 1862 the extreme south of the Annamese Empire—the province of Cochin-China—was ceded to France. Lastly, the French obtained a foothold in the Pacific, by the annexation of Tahiti and the Marquesas Islands

in 1842, and of New Caledonia in 1855. But in 1878 the French dominions in the non-European world were, apart from Algeria, of slight importance. They were quite insignificant in comparison with the far-spreading realms of her ancient rival, Britain.

On a much greater scale than the expansion of France was the expansion of the already vast Russian Empire during this period. The history of Russia in the nineteenth century is made up of a series of alternations between a régime of comparative liberalism, when the interest of government and people was chiefly turned towards the west, and a régime of reaction, when the government endeavoured to pursue what was called a 'national' or purely Russian policy, and to exclude all Western influences. During these long intervals of reaction, attention was turned eastward; and it was in the reactionary periods, mainly, that the Russian power was rapidly extended in three directions—over the Caucasus, over Central Asia, and in the Far East.

Before this advance, the huge Russian Empire had been (everywhere except on the west, in the region of Poland) marked off by very clearly defined barriers. The Caucasus presented a formidable obstacle between Russia and the Turkish and Persian Empires; the deserts of Central Asia separated her from the Moslem peoples of Khiva, Bokhara and Turkestan; the huge range of the Altai Mountains and the desert of Gobi cut off her thinly peopled province of Eastern Siberia

from the Chinese Empire; while in the remote East her shores verged upon ice-bound and inhospitable seas. Hers was thus an extraordinarily isolated and self-contained empire, except on the side of Europe; and even on the side of Europe she was more inaccessible than any other state, being all but land-locked, and divided from Central Europe by a belt of forests and marshes.

The part she had played in the Napoleonic Wars, and in the events which followed them, had brought her more fully into contact with Europe than she had ever been before. The acquisition of Poland and Finland, which she obtained by the treaties of 1815, had increased this contact, for both of these states were much influenced by Western ideas. Russia had promised that their distinct national existence, and their national institutions, should be preserved; and this seemed to suggest that the Russian Empire might develop into a partnership of nations of varying types, not altogether unlike the form into which the British Empire was developing. But this conception had no attraction for the Russian mind, or at any rate for the Russian government; and the reactionary or pure-Russian school, which strove to exclude all alien influences, was inevitably hostile to it. Hence the period of reaction, and of eastward conquest, saw also the denial of the promises made in 1815. Poland preserved her distinct national organisation, in any full degree, only for fifteen years; even in the

faintest degree, it was preserved for less than fifty years. Finland was allowed a longer grace, but only, perhaps, because she was isolated and had but a small population: her turn for 'Russification' was to come in due course. The exclusion of Western influence, the segregation of Russia from the rest of the world, and the repudiation of liberty and of varieties of type thus form the main features of the reactionary periods which filled the greater part of this age; and the activity of Russia in eastward expansion was in part intended to forward this policy, by diverting the attention of the Russian people from the west towards the east, and by substituting the pride of dominion for the desire for liberty. Hence imperialism came to be identified, for the Russian people, with the denial of liberty.

But it is a very striking fact that each of the three main lines of territorial advance followed by Russia in Asia during this period led her to overstep the natural barriers which had made her an isolated and self-dependent empire, brought her into relation with other civilisations, and compelled her to play her part as one of the factors in world-politics.

Russia had begun the conquest of the wild Caucasus region as early as 1802; after a long series of wars, she completed it by the acquisition of the region of Kars in 1878. The mastery of the Caucasus brought her into immediate relation with the Armenian province of the Turkish Empire, which she henceforward threatened from

the east as well as from the west. It brought her into contact also with the Persian Empire, over whose policy, from 1835 onwards, she wielded a growing influence, to the perturbation of Britain. And besides bringing her into far closer relations with the two greatest Mahomedan powers, it gave her a considerable number of Mahomedan subjects, since some of the Caucasus tribes belonged to that faith.

Again, the conquest of Central Asia led her to overstep the barrier of the Kirghiz deserts. The wandering Kirghiz and Turkoman tribes of this barren region lived largely upon the pillage of caravans, and upon raids into neighbouring countries; they disposed of their spoil (which often included Russian captives) mainly in the *bazars* of Bokhara, Khiva, Samarkand and Khokand—Mahomedan Khanates which occupied the more fertile areas in the southern and south-eastern part of the desert region. The attempt to control the Turkoman raiders brought Russia into conflict with these outposts of Islam. Almost the whole of this region was conquered in a long series of campaigns between 1848 and 1876. These conquests (which covered an area 1200 miles from east to west and 600 miles from north to south) made Russia a great Mahomedan power. They also brought her into direct contact with Afghanistan. Russian agents were at work in Afghanistan from 1838 onwards. The shadow of her vast power, looming over Persia and the Persian Gulf on the one hand, and over the

mountain frontiers of India on the other, naturally appeared highly menacing to Britain. It was the direct cause of the advance of the British power from the Indus over North-Western India, until it could rest upon the natural frontier of the mountains—an advance which took place mainly during the years 1839-49. And it formed the chief source of the undying suspicion of Russia which was the dominant note of British foreign policy throughout the period.

Another feature of these conquests was that, taken in conjunction with the French conquest of Algeria and the British conquest of India, they constituted the first serious impact of European civilisation upon the vast realm of Islam. Until now the regions of the Middle East which had been subjugated by the followers of Mahomed had repelled every attack of the West. More definite in its creed, and more exacting in its demands upon the allegiance of its adherents, than any other religion, Mahomedanism had for more than a thousand years been able to resist with extraordinary success the influence of other civilisations; and it had been, from the time of the Crusades onwards, the most formidable opponent of the civilisation of the West. Under the rule of the Turk the Mahomedan world had become stagnant and sterile, and it had shut out not merely the direct control of the West (which would have been legitimate enough), but the influence of Western ideas. All the innumerable schemes of reform which were based upon the

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retention of the old régime in the Turkish Empire have hopelessly broken down; and the only chance for an awakening in these lands of ancient civilisation seemed to depend upon the breakdown of the old system under the impact of Western imperialism or insurgent nationalism. It has only been during the nineteenth century, as a result of Russian, French, and British imperialism, that the resisting power of Islam has begun to give way to the influence of Europe.

The third line of Russian advance was on the Pacific coast, where in the years 1858 and 1860 Russia obtained from China the Amur province, with the valuable harbour of Vladivostok. It was an almost empty land, but its acquisition made Russia a Pacific power, and brought her into very close neighbourhood with China, into whose reserved markets, at the same period, the maritime powers of the West were forcing an entrance. At the same time Russian relations with Japan, which were to have such pregnant consequences, were beginning: in 1875 the Japanese were forced to cede the southern half of the island of Sakhalin, and perhaps we may date from this year the suspicion of Russia which dominated Japanese policy for a long time to come.

Thus, while in Europe Russia was trying to shut herself off from contact with the world, her advances in Asia had brought her at three points into the full stream of world-politics. Her vast empire, though for the most part very thinly peopled, formed beyond all comparison the

greatest continuous area ever brought under a single rule, since it amounted to between eight and nine million square miles; and when the next age, the age of rivalry for world-power, began, this colossal fabric of power haunted and dominated the imaginations of men.

A demonstration of the growing power of Western civilisation, even more impressive than the expansion of the Russian Empire, was afforded during these years by the opening to Western influence of the ancient, pot-bound empires of the Far East, China and Japan. The opening of China began with the Anglo-Chinese War of 1840, which led to the acquisition of Hong-Kong and the opening of a group of treaty ports to European trade. It was carried further by the combined Franco-British war of 1857-58, which was ended by a treaty permitting the free access of European travellers, traders, and missionaries to the interior, and providing for the permanent residence of ambassadors of the signatory powers at the court of Pekin. All the European states rushed to share these privileges, and the Westernising of China had begun. It did not take place rapidly or completely, and it was accompanied by grave disturbances, notably the Taiping rebellion, which was only suppressed by the aid of the British General Gordon, in command of a Chinese army. But though the process was slow, it was fully at work by 1878. The external trade of China, nearly all in European hands, had assumed great proportions. The missionaries and schoolmasters

of Europe and America were busily at work in the most populous provinces. Shanghai had become a European city, and one of the great trade-centres of the world. In a lame and incompetent way the Chinese government was attempting to organise its army on the European model, and to create a navy after the European style. Steamboats were plying on the Yang-tse-kiang, and the first few miles of railway were open. Chinese students were beginning to resort to the universities and schools of the West; and although the conservatism of the Chinese mind was very slow to make the plunge, it was already plain that this vast hive of patient, clever, and industrious men was bound to enter the orbit of Western civilisation.

Meanwhile, after a longer and stiffer resistance, Japan had made up her mind to a great change with amazing suddenness and completeness. There had been some preliminary relations with the Western peoples, beginning with the visits of the American Commodore Perry in 1853 and 1854, and a few ports had been opened to European trade. But then came a sudden, violent reaction (1862). The British embassy was attacked; a number of British subjects were murdered; a mixed fleet of British, French, Dutch, and American ships proved the power of Western arms, and Japan began to awaken to the necessity of adopting, in self-defence, the methods of these intrusive foreigners. The story of the internal revolution in Japan, which began

in 1866, cannot be told here; enough that it led to the most astounding change in history. Emerging from her age-long isolation and from her contentment with her ancient, unchanging modes of life, Japan realised that the future lay with the restless and progressive civilisation of the West; and with a national resolve to which there is no sort of parallel or analogy in history, decided that she must not wait to be brought under subjection, but must adopt the new methods and ideas for herself, if possible without shedding too much of her ancient traditions. By a deliberate exercise of the will and an extraordinary effort of organisation, she became industrial without ceasing to be artistic; she adopted parliamentary institutions without abandoning her religious veneration for the person of the Mikado; she borrowed the military methods of the West without losing the chivalrous and fatalist devotion of her warrior-caste; and devised a Western educational system without disturbing the deep orientalism of her mind. It was a transformation almost terrifying, and to any Western quite bewildering, in its deliberation, rapidity, and completeness. Europe long remained unconvinced of its reality. But in 1878 the work was, in its essentials, already achieved, and the one state of non-European origin which has been able calmly to choose what she would accept and what she would reject among the systems and methods of the West, stood ready to play an equal part with the European nations in the later stages of the long imperial struggle.

One last sphere of activity remains to be surveyed before we turn to consider the development of the new British Empire: the expansion of the independent states which had arisen on the ruins of the first colonial empires in the New World. Of the Spanish and Portuguese states of Central and South America it is not necessary to say much. They had established their independence between 1815 and 1825. But the unhappy traditions of the long Spanish ascendancy had rendered them incapable of using freedom well, and Central and South America became the scene of ceaseless and futile revolutions. The influence of the American Monroe Doctrine forbade, perhaps fortunately, the intervention of any of the European states to put an end to this confusion, and America herself made no serious attempt to restrain it. It was not until the later years of our period that any large stream of immigration began to flow into these lands from other European countries than Spain and Portugal, and that their vast natural resources began to be developed by the energy and capital of Europe. But by 1878 the more fertile of these states, Argentina, Brazil, and Chili, were being enriched by these means, were becoming highly important elements in the trade-system of the world, and were consequently beginning to achieve a more stable and settled civilisation. In some regards this work (though it belongs mainly to the period after 1878) constitutes one of the happiest results of the extra-European activities of the European peoples

during the nineteenth century. It was carried on, in the main, not by governments or under government encouragement, but by the private enterprises of merchants and capitalists; and while a very large part in these enterprises was played by British and American traders and settlers, one of the most notable features of the growth of South America was that it gave play to some of the European peoples, notably the Germans and the Italians, whose part in the political division of the world was relatively small.

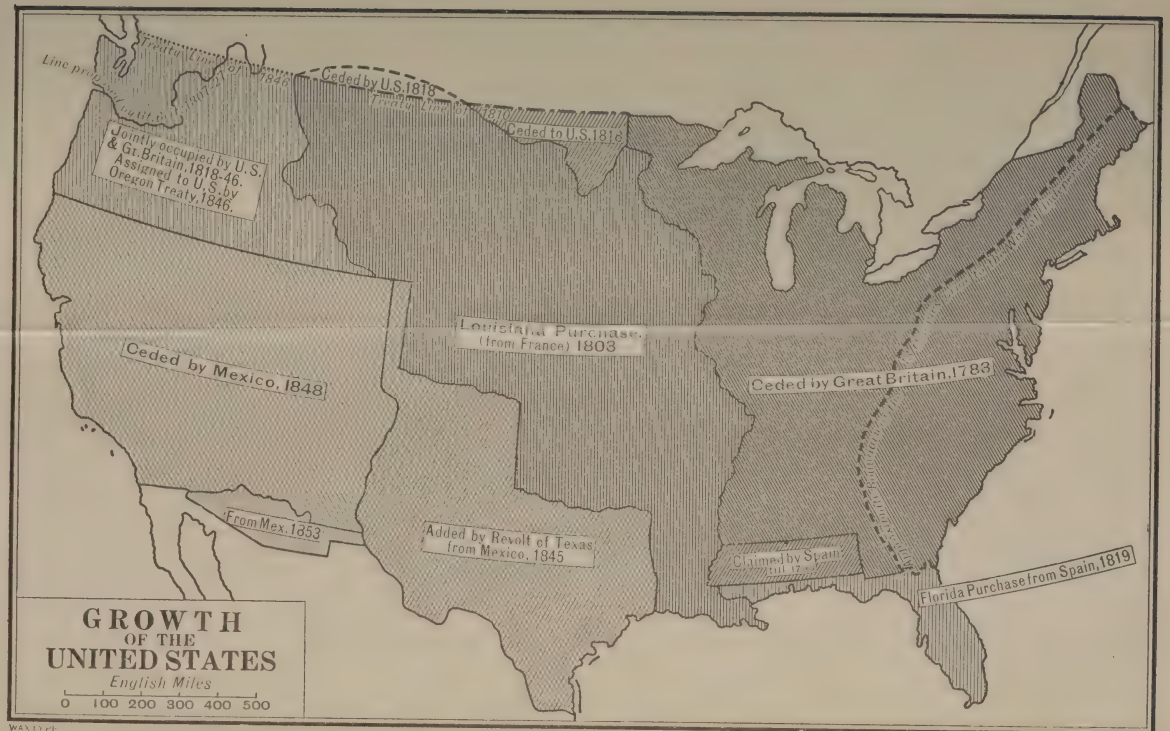
Far more impressive was the almost miraculous expansion which came to the United States during this period. When the United States started upon their career as an independent nation in 1782, their territory was limited to the lands east of the Mississippi, excluding Florida, which was still retained by Spain. Only the eastern margin of this area was at all fully settled; and the population numbered at most 2,000,000, predominantly of British blood. In 1803, by a treaty with Napoleon, the French colony of Louisiana, with vast and ill-defined claims to the territory west of the Mississippi, was purchased from France. Meanwhile the stream of immigrants from the eastern states, and in a less degree from Europe, was pouring over the Alleghany Mountains and occupying the great central plain; and by 1815 the population had risen to almost 9,000,000, still mainly of British stock, though it also included substantial French and German elements, as well as large numbers of

negro slaves. In 1819 Florida was acquired by purchase from Spain. In 1845-48 a revolution in Texas (then part of Mexico), followed by a war with Mexico, led to the annexation of a vast area extending from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific coast, including the paradise of California ; while treaties with Britain in 1818 and 1846 determined the northern boundary of the States, and in 1867 Alaska was purchased from Russia for £1,450,000.

Thus the imperialist spirit was working as irresistibly in the democratic communities of the New World as in the monarchies of Europe. Not content with the possession of vast and almost unpeopled areas, they had spread their dominion from ocean to ocean, and built up an empire less extensive indeed than that of Russia, but even more compact, far richer in resources, and far better suited to be the home of a highly civilised people. Into this enormous area there began to pour a mighty flood of immigration from Europe, as soon as the Napoleonic wars were over. By 1878 the population of the States had risen to about 50,000,000, and was greater than that of any European state save Russia. A new world-state of the first rank had arisen. It was made up of contributions from all the European peoples. Those of British stock, especially the Irish, still predominated throughout this period, but the Germans and the Scandinavians were becoming increasingly numerous, and the Italians, Greeks, Poles, Czechs, Russian Jews, and other stocks

were beginning to form very substantial elements. It was a melting-pot of races, which had to be somehow welded into a nation by the moulding-power of the traditions implanted by the earlier British settlers. It may fairly be said that no community has ever had imposed upon it a more difficult task than the task imposed by Fate upon the American people of creating a national unity out of this heterogeneous material. The great experiment was, during this period, singularly successful. The strength of the national sentiment and of the tradition of freedom was very powerfully exhibited in the strain of the great Civil War (1861-65) which maintained at a great cost the threatened unity of the republic, and brought about the emancipation of the negro slaves. And the Civil War produced in Abraham Lincoln a national hero, and an exponent of the national character and ideals, worthy to be set beside Washington. The America of Lincoln manifestly stood for Liberty and Justice, the fundamental ideals of Western civilisation.

But in this great moulding tradition of freedom there was one dubious and narrowing element. Accustomed to regard herself as having achieved liberty by shaking off her connection with the Old World, America was tempted to think of this liberty as something peculiar to herself, something which the 'effete monarchies' of the Old World did not, and could not, fully understand or share, something which exempted her from responsibility for the non-American world, and from the


Ceded by U.S. 1818
Ceded to U.S. 1818
Jointly occupied by U.S. & Gt. Britain, 1818-46. Assigned to U.S. by Oregon Treaty, 1846.
Louisiana Purchase (from France) 1803
Ceded by Mexico, 1848
Ceded by Great Britain, 1783
From Mex. 1853
Added by Revolt of Texas from Mexico, 1845
Claimed by Spain
Florida Purchase from Spain, 1819
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duty of aiding and defending liberty beyond her own limits. In the abounding prosperity of this fortunate land, liberty was apt to be too readily identified merely with the opportunity of securing material prosperity, and the love of liberty was apt to become, what indeed it too often is everywhere, a purely self-regarding emotion. The distance of the republic from Europe and its controversies, its economic self-sufficiency, its apparent security against all attack, fostered and strengthened this feeling. While the peoples of the Old World strove with agony and travail towards freedom and justice, or wrestled with the task of sharing their own civilisation with the backward races of the globe, the echo of their strivings penetrated but faintly into the mind of America, like the noises of the street dimly heard through the shuttered windows of a warmed and lighted room. To the citizens of the Middle West and the Far West, especially, busy as they were with the development of vast untapped resources, the affairs of the outer world necessarily appeared remote and insignificant. Even their newspapers told them little about these far-off events. Naturally it appeared that the function of the republic in the progress of the world was to till its own garden, and to afford a haven of refuge to the oppressed and impoverished who poured in from all lands; and this idea was strengthened by the great number of immigrants who were driven to the New World by the failure of the successive European revolutions of the nineteenth century,

and by the oppressive tyranny of the Habsburg monarchy and the Russian despots.

This attitude of aloofness from, and contempt, or, at the best, indifference, to the Old World was further encouraged by the traditional treatment of American history. The outstanding event of that story was, of course, the breach with Britain, with which the independent existence of the Republic began, and which constituted also almost its only direct contact with the politics of the Old World. The view of this conflict which was driven into the national mind by the school-books, by the annual celebrations of the Fourth of July, and by incessant newspaper writing, represented the great quarrel not as a dispute in a family of free communities, in which a new and very difficult problem was raised, and in which there were faults on both sides, but as one in which all the right was on one side, as a heroic resistance of free men against malevolent tyranny. This view has been profoundly modified by the work of American historians, whose researches during the last generation have transformed the treatment of the American Revolution. To-day the old one-sided view finds expression, in books of serious pretensions, only in England; and it is to American scholars that we must have recourse for a more scientific and impartial treatment. But the new and saner view has scarcely yet made its way into the school-books and the newspapers. If Britain, the mother of political liberty in the modern world, the land from which these freemen had inherited their own

liberties and the spirit which made them insist upon their enlargement, was made to appear a tyrant power, how could it be expected that the mass of Americans, unversed in world-politics, should follow with sympathy the progress of liberty beyond the limits of their own republic ? It was in the light of this traditional attitude that the bulk of Americans regarded not only the wars and controversies of Europe, but the vast process of European expansion. All these things did not appear to concern them ; they seemed to be caused by motives and ideas which the great republic had outgrown, though, as we have already seen, and shall see again, the republic had by no means outgrown them. The strength of this traditional attitude, fostered as it was by every circumstance, naturally made the bulk of the American people slow to realise, when the great challenge of Germany was forced upon the world, that the problems of world-politics were as vitally important for them as for all other peoples, and that no free nation could afford to be indifferent to the fate of liberty upon the earth.

At one moment, indeed, almost at the beginning of the period, it appeared as if this narrow outlook was about to be abandoned. The League of Peace of the great European powers of 1815[1] had, by 1822, developed into a league of despots for the suppression of revolutionary tendencies. They had intervened to crush revolutionary outbreaks

[1] See *Nationalism and Internationalism*, p. 155 ff.

in Naples and Piedmont; they had authorised France to enter Spain in order to destroy the democratic system which had been set up in that country in 1820. Britain alone protested against these interventions, claiming that every state ought to be left free to fix its own form of government; and in 1822 Canning had practically withdrawn from the League of Peace, because it was being turned into an engine of oppression. It was notorious that, Spain once subjugated, the monarchs desired to go on to the reconquest of the revolting Spanish colonies in South America. Britain could not undertake a war on the Continent against all the Continental powers combined, but she could prevent their intervention in America, and Canning made it plain that the British fleet would forbid any such action. To strengthen his hands, he suggested to the American ambassador that the United States might take common action in this sense. The result was the famous message of President Monroe to Congress in December 1823, which declared that the United States accepted the doctrine of non-intervention, and that they would resist any attempt on the part of the European monarchs to establish their reactionary system in the New World.

In effect this was a declaration of support for Britain. It was so regarded by Monroe's most influential adviser, Thomas Jefferson. 'Great Britain,' he wrote, 'is the nation which can do us the most harm of any one, or all, on earth,

and with her on our side we need not fear the whole world. With her, then, we should the most sedulously cherish a cordial friendship; and nothing would tend more to knit our affection than to be fighting once more side by side in the same cause.' To be fighting side by side with Britain in the same cause—the cause of the secure establishment of freedom in the world—this seemed to the Democrat Jefferson an object worth aiming at; and the promise of this seemed to be the main recommendation of the Monroe Doctrine. It was intended as an alliance for the defence of freedom, not as a proclamation of aloofness; and thus America seemed to be taking her natural place as one of the powers concerned to strengthen law and liberty, not only within her own borders, but throughout the world.

The Monroe Doctrine was rapidly accepted as expressing the fundamental principle of American foreign policy. But under the influence of the powerful tradition which we have attempted to analyse, its significance was gradually changed; and instead of being interpreted as a proclamation that the great republic could not be indifferent to the fate of liberty, and would co-operate to defend it from attack in all cases where such co-operation was reasonably practicable, it came to be interpreted by average public opinion as meaning that America had no concern with the politics of the Old World, and that the states of the Old World must not be

allowed to meddle in any of the affairs of either American continent. The world of civilisation was to be divided into water-tight compartments; as if it were not indissolubly one. Yet even in this rather narrow form, the Monroe doctrine has on the whole been productive of good; it has helped to save South America from becoming one of the fields of rivalry of the European powers.

But it may be doubted whether the mere enunciation of the doctrine, even in this precise and definite form, has of itself been sufficient to secure this end. There is good reason to believe that the doctrine would not have been safe from challenge if it had not been safeguarded by the supremacy of the British Fleet. For throughout the last half-century all the world has known that any defiance of this doctrine, and any attack upon America, would bring Britain into the field. During all this period one of the factors of world-politics has been the existence of an informal and one-sided alliance between Britain and America. The alliance has been informal, because it has not rested upon any treaty or even upon any definite understanding. It has been one-sided, because while average opinion in America has been distrustful of Britain, has been apt to put unfavourable constructions upon British policy, and has generally failed to appreciate the value and significance of the work which Britain has done in the outer world, Britain, on the other hand, has always known that America stood for justice and freedom;

and therefore, however difficult the relations between the two powers might occasionally become, Britain has steadfastly refused to consider the possibility of a breach with America, and with rare exceptions has steadily given her support to American policy. The action of the British squadron off the Philippines in 1898, in quietly interposing itself between the threatening German guns and the American Fleet, has, in fact, been broadly typical of the British attitude. This factor has not only helped to preserve the Monroe Doctrine from challenge, it has indirectly contributed to deepen the American conviction that it was possible, even in the changed conditions of the modern world, to maintain a complete isolation from the political controversies of the powers.

During the period 1815-1878, then, while the greater part of Europe was still indifferent to extra-European affairs, America had developed into a vast state wherein freedom and law were enthroned, a huge melting-pot wherein diverse peoples were being gradually unified and turned into a new nation under the moulding power of a great tradition of liberty. But her geographical position, and certain elements in her tradition, had hitherto led her to abstain from, and even to repudiate, that great part in the shaping of the common destinies of civilisation to which she was manifestly called by her wealth, her numbers, her freedom, and her share in the traditions of all the European peoples. In the nature of things, what-

ever some Americans might think, this voluntary isolation could not continue for ever. It was to be brought to an end by the fevered developments of the next era, and by the great challenge to the liberties of the world in which it culminated.

VI

THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE, 1815-1878

MIGHTY as had been the achievements of other lands which have been surveyed in the last section, the main part in the expansion of European civilisation over the world during the first three-quarters of the nineteenth century was played by Britain. For she was engaged in opening out new continents and sub-continents; and she was giving an altogether new significance to the word 'Empire.' Above all, she was half-blindly laying the foundations of a system whereby freedom and the enriching sense of national unity might be realised at once in the new and vacant lands of the earth, and among its oldest civilised peoples; she was feeling her way towards a mode of linking diverse and free states in a common brotherhood of peace and mutual respect. There is no section of the history of European imperialism more interesting than the story of the growth and organisation of the heterogeneous and disparate empire with which Britain entered upon the new age.

This development appeared, on the surface, to be quite haphazard, and to be governed by no

clearly grasped theories or policy. It is indeed true that at all times British policy has not been governed by theory, but by the moulding force of a tradition of ordered freedom. The period produced in Britain no imperialist statesman of the first rank, nor did imperial questions play a leading part in the deliberations of parliament. In fact, the growth of the British Empire and its organisation were alike spontaneous and unsystematic; their only guide (but it proved to be a good guide) was the spirit of self-government, existing in every scattered section of the people; and the part played by the colonists themselves, and by the administrative officers in India and elsewhere, was throughout more important than the part played by colonial secretaries, East Indian directors, parliamentarians and publicists at home. For that reason the story is not easily handled in a broad and simple way.

Enjoying almost a monopoly of oversea activity, Britain was free, in most parts of the world, to expand her dominions as she thought fit. Her statesmen, however, were far from desiring further expansion: they rightly felt that the responsibilities already assumed were great enough to tax the resources of any state, however rich and populous. But, try as they would, they could not prevent the inevitable process of expansion. Several causes contributed to produce this result. Perhaps the most important was the unexampled growth of British trade, which during these years dominated the whole world; and the

flag is apt to follow trade. A second cause was the pressure of economic distress and the extraordinarily rapid increase of population at home, leading to wholesale emigration; in the early years of the century an extravagantly severe penal code, which inflicted the penalty of death, commonly commuted into transportation, for an incredible number of offences, gave an artificial impetus to this movement. The restless and adventurous spirit of the settlers in huge and unexplored new countries contributed another motive for expansion. And in some cases, notably in India, political necessity seemed to demand annexations. Over a movement thus stimulated, the home authorities found themselves, with the best will in the world, unable to exercise any effective restraint; and the already colossal British Empire continued to grow. It is no doubt to be regretted that other European nations were not able during this period to take part in the development of the non-European world in a more direct way than by sending emigrants to America or the British lands. But it is quite certain that the growth of British territory is not to be attributed in any degree to the deliberate policy, or to the greed, of the home government, which did everything in its power to check it.

In India the Russian menace seemed to necessitate the adoption of a policy towards the independent states of the North-West which brought an extension of the frontier, between 1839 and 1849, to the great mountain ranges which form

the natural boundary of India in this direction; while a succession of intolerable and quite unprovoked aggressions by the Burmese led to a series of wars which resulted in the annexation of very great territories in the east and north-east: Assam, Aracan, and Tenasserim in 1825; Pegu and Rangoon in 1853; finally, in 1885-86, the whole remainder of the Burmese Empire. In North America settlers found their way across the Rocky Mountains or over the Isthmus of Panama into the region of British Columbia, which was given a distinct colonial organisation in 1858; and the colonisation of the Red River Settlement, 1811-18, which became in 1870 the province of Manitoba, began the development of the great central plain. In South Africa frontier wars with the Kaffirs, and the restless movements of Boer trekkers, brought about an expansion of the limits of Cape Colony, the annexation of Natal, and the temporary annexation of the Orange River Settlement and the Transvaal; but all these additions were most reluctantly accepted; the Orange River Settlement and the Transvaal soon had their independence restored, though the former, at any rate, accepted it unwillingly. In Australia, drafts of new settlers planting themselves at new points led to the organisation of six distinct colonies between 1825 and 1859; and this implied the definite annexation of the whole continent. New Zealand was annexed in 1839, but only because British traders had already established themselves in the islands, were in

unhappy relations with the natives, and had to be brought under control.

But it was not the territorial expansion of the British Empire which gave significance to this period in its history, but, in a far higher degree, the new principles of government which were developed during its course. The new colonial policy which gradually shaped itself during this age was so complete a departure from every precedent of the past, and represented so remarkable an experiment in imperial government, that its sources deserve a careful analysis. It was brought into being by a number of distinct factors and currents of opinion which were at work both in Britain and in the colonies.

In the first place, there existed in Britain, as in other European countries, a large body of opinion which held that all colonies were sure to demand and obtain their independence as soon as they became strong enough to desire it; that as independent states they could be quite as profitable to the mother-country as they could ever be while they remained attached to her, more especially if the parting took place without bitterness; and that the wisest policy for Britain to pursue was therefore to facilitate their development, to place no barrier in the way of the increase of their self-government, and to enable them at the earliest moment to start as free nations on their own account. This was not, indeed, the universal, nor perhaps even the preponderant, attitude in regard to the colonies in

the middle of the nineteenth century. But it was pretty common. It appeared in the most unexpected quarters, as when Disraeli said that the colonies were 'millstones about our necks,' or as when *The Times* advocated in a leading article the cession of Canada to the United States, on the ground that annexation to the great Republic was the inevitable destiny of that colony, and that it was much better that it should be carried out in a peaceable and friendly way than after a conflict. It is difficult to-day to realise that men could ever have entertained such opinions. But they were widely held; and it must at least be obvious that the prevalence of these views is quite inconsistent with the idea that Britain was deliberately following a policy of expansion and annexation in this age. Men who held these opinions (and they were to be found in every party) regarded with resentment and alarm every addition to what seemed to them the useless burdens assumed by the nation, and required to be satisfied that every new annexation of territory was not merely justifiable, but inevitable.

A second factor which contributed to the change of attitude towards the colonies was the growing influence of a new school of economic thought, the school of Adam Smith, Ricardo, and Malthus. Their ideas had begun to affect national policy as early as the twenties, when Huskisson took the first steps on the way to free trade. In the thirties the bulk of the trading and industrial

classes had become converts to these ideas, which won their definite victories in the budgets of Sir Robert Peel, 1843-46, and in those of his disciple Gladstone. The essence of this doctrine, as it affected colonial policy, was that the regulation of trade by government, which had been the main object of the old colonial policy, brought no advantages, but only checked its free development. And for a country in the position which Britain then occupied, this was undeniably true; so overwhelming was her preponderance in world-trade that every current seemed to set in her direction, and the removal of artificial barriers, originally designed to train the current towards her shores, allowed it to follow its natural course. The only considerable opposition to this body of economic doctrine came from those who desired to protect British agriculture; but this motive had (at this period) no bearing upon colonial trade. The triumph of the doctrine of free trade meant that the principal motive which had earlier led to restrictions upon the self-government of the colonies—the desire to secure commercial advantages for the mother-country—was no longer operative. The central idea of the old colonial system was destroyed by the disciples of Adam Smith; and there no longer remained any apparent reason why the mother-country should desire to control the fiscal policy of the colonies. An even more important result of the adoption of this new economic doctrine was that it destroyed every motive which would lead the British govern-

ment to endeavour to secure for British traders a monopoly of the traffic with British possessions. Henceforth all territories administered under the direct control of the home government were thrown open as freely to the merchants of other countries as to those of Britain herself. The part which Britain now undertook in the undeveloped regions of her empire (except in so far as they were controlled by fully self-governing colonies) was simply that of maintaining peace and law; and in these regions she adopted an attitude which may fairly be described as the attitude, not of a monopolist, but of a trustee for civilisation. It was this policy which explains the small degree of jealousy with which the rapid expansion of her territory was regarded by the rest of the civilised world. If the same policy had been followed, not necessarily at home, but in their colonial possessions, by all the colonising powers, the motives for colonial rivalry would have been materially diminished, and the claims of various states to colonial territories, when the period of rivalry began, would have been far more easily adjusted.

These were negative forces, leading merely to the abandonment of the older colonial theories. But there were also positive and constructive forces at work. First among them may be noted a new body of definite theory as to the function which colonies ought to play in the general economy of the civilised world. It was held to be their function not (as in the older theory) to afford lucrative opportunities for trade to the

mother-country: so far as trade was concerned it seemed to matter little whether a country was a colony or an independent state. But the main object of colonisation was, on this view, the systematic draining-off of the surplus population of the older lands. This, it was felt, could not safely be left to the operation of mere chance; and one of the great advantages of colonial possessions was that they enabled the country which controlled them to deal in a scientific way with its surplus population, and to prevent the reproduction of unhealthy conditions in the new communities, which was apt to result if emigrants were allowed to drift aimlessly wheresoever chance took them, and received no guidance as to the proper modes of establishing themselves in their new homes. The great apostle of this body of colonial theory was Edward Gibbon Wakefield; and his book, *A View of the Art of Colonisation* (1847), deserves to be noted as one of the classics of the history of imperialism. He did not confine himself to theory, but was tireless in organising practical experiments. They were carried out, in a curious revival of the methods of the seventeenth century, by means of a series of colonising companies which Wakefield promoted. The settlement of South Australia, the first considerable settlement in the North Island of New Zealand, and the two admirably designed and executed settlements of Canterbury and Otago in the South Island of New Zealand, were all examples of his methods: with the exception of the North Island

settlement, they were all very successful. Nor were these the only instances of organised and assisted emigration. In 1820 a substantial settlement, financed by government, was made in the eastern part of Cape Colony, in the region of Grahamstown and Port Elizabeth, and this brought the first considerable body of British inhabitants into South Africa, hitherto almost exclusively Dutch. An unsuccessful plantation at Swan River in West Australia may also be noted. Systematic and scientific colonisation was thus being studied in Britain during this period as never before. In the view of its advocates Britain was the trustee of civilisation for the administration of the most valuable unpeopled regions of the earth, and it was her duty to see that they were skilfully utilised. So high a degree of success attended some of their efforts that it is impossible not to regret that they were not carried further. But they depended upon Crown control of undeveloped lands. With the growth of full self-government in the colonies the exercise of these Crown functions was transferred from the ministry and parliament of Britain to the ministries and parliaments of the colonies; and this transference put an end to the possibility of a centralised organisation and direction of emigration.

A second constructive factor very potently at work during this age was the humanitarian spirit, which had become a powerful factor in British life during the late eighteenth and early nine-

teenth centuries. It had received perhaps its most practical expression in the abolition of the slave-trade in 1806, and the campaign against the slave-trade in the rest of the world became an important object of British policy from that time onwards. Having abolished the slave-trade, the humanitarians proceeded to advocate the complete abolition of negro slavery throughout the British Empire. They won their victory in 1833, when the British parliament declared slavery illegal throughout the Empire, and voted £20,000,000—at a time when British finance was still suffering from the burdens of the Napoleonic War—to purchase from their masters the freedom of all the slaves then existing in the Empire. It was a noble deed, but it was perhaps carried out a little too suddenly, and it led to grave difficulties, especially in the West Indies, whose prosperity was seriously impaired, and in South Africa, where it brought about acute friction with the slave-owning Boer farmers. But it gave evidence of the adoption of a new attitude towards the backward races, hitherto mercilessly exploited by all the imperialist powers. One expression of this attitude had already been afforded by the organisation (1787) of the colony of Sierra Leone, on the West African coast, as a place of refuge for freed slaves desiring to return to the land of their fathers.

It was principally through the activity of missionaries that this new point of view was expressed and cultivated. Organised missionary activity in

Britain dates from the end of the eighteenth century, but its range grew with extraordinary rapidity throughout the period. And wherever the missionaries went, they constituted themselves the protectors and advocates of the native races among whom they worked. Often enough they got themselves into bad odour with the European traders and settlers with whom they came in contact. But through their powerful home organisations they exercised very great influence over public opinion and over government policy. The power of 'Exeter Hall,' where the religious bodies and the missionary societies held their meetings in London, was at its height in the middle of the nineteenth century, and politicians could not afford to disregard it, even if they had desired to do so. This influence, supporting the trend of humanitarian opinion, succeeded in establishing it as one of the principles of British imperial policy that it was the duty of the British government to protect the native races against the exploitation of the European settlers, and to guide them gently into a civilised way of life. It is a sound and noble principle, and it may fairly be said that it has been honestly carried out, so far as the powers of the home government rendered possible. No government in the world controls a greater number or variety of subjects belonging to the backward races than the British; no trading nation has had greater opportunities for the oppressive exploitation of defenceless subjects. Yet the grave

abuse of these opportunities has been infrequent. There have been in the history of modern British imperialism sporadic instances of injustice, like the forced labour of Kanakas in the Pacific. But there have been no Congo outrages, no Putumayo atrocities, no Pequena slave scandals, no merciless slaughter like that of the Hereros in German South-West Africa.

The principle of the protection of backward peoples has, however, sometimes had an unfortunate influence upon colonial policy; and there was no colony in which it exercised a more unhappy effect than South Africa. Here the Boer farmers still retained towards their native neighbours the attitude which had been characteristic of all the European peoples in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: they regarded the negro as a natural inferior, born to servitude. It is not surprising that no love was lost between the Boers and the missionaries, who appeared as the protectors of the negroes, and whose representations turned British opinion violently against the whole Boer community. This was in itself a sufficiently unfortunate result: it lies largely at the base of the prolonged disharmony which divided the two peoples in South Africa. The belief that the Boers could not be trusted to deal fairly with the natives formed, for a long period, the chief reason which urged the British Government to retain their control over the Boers, even when they had trekked away from the Cape (1836) and established themselves beyond the

Orange and the Vaal rivers; and the conflict of this motive with the desire to avoid any increase of colonial responsibilities, and with the feeling that if the Boers disliked the British system, they had better be left in freedom to organise themselves in their own way, accounts for the curious vacillation in the policy of the period on this question. At first the trekkers were left to themselves; then the lands which they had occupied were annexed; then their independence was recognised; and finally, when, at the end of the period, they seemed to be causing a dangerous excitement among the Zulus and other native tribes, the Transvaal was once more annexed; with the result that revolt broke out, and the Majuba campaign had to be fought.

Again, tenderness for the natives led to several curious and not very successful experiments in organisation. The annexation of Natal was long delayed because it was held that this area ought to form a native reserve, and fruitless attempts were made to restrict the settlement of Europeans in this empty and fertile land. An attempt was also made to set up a series of native areas under British protection, from which the white settler was excluded. British Kaffraria, Griqualand East and Griqualand West were examples of this policy, which is still represented, not unsuccessfully, by the great protected area of Basutoland. But, on the whole, these experiments in the handling of the native problem in South Africa did more harm than good. They were unsuccessful

mainly because South Africa was a white man's country, into which the most vigorous of the native races, those of the Bantu stock (Kaffirs, Zulus, Matabili, etc.), were more recent immigrants than the white men themselves. Owing to their warlike character and rapidly growing numbers they constituted for a long time a very formidable danger; and neither the missionaries nor the home authorities sufficiently recognised these facts.

Perhaps the most unhappy result of this friction over the native question, apart from the alienation of Boer and Briton which it produced, was the fact that it was the principal cause of the long delay in establishing self-governing institutions in South Africa. The home government hesitated to give to the colonists full control over their own affairs, because it distrusted the use which they were likely to make of their powers over the natives; even the normal institutions of all British colonies were not established in Cape Colony till 1854, and in Natal till 1883. But although in this case the new attitude towards the backward races led to some unhappy results, the spirit which inspired it was altogether admirable, and its growing strength accounts in part for the real degree of success which has been achieved by British administrators in the government of regions not suited for the settlement of Europeans in large numbers. Indeed, this spirit has come to be one of the outstanding features of modern British imperialism.

It was not only in the treatment of backward races that the humanitarian spirit made itself felt. It was at work also in the government of the highly developed civilisations of India, where, during this period, British power began to be boldly used to put an end to barbarous or inhumane practices which were supported or tolerated by the religious beliefs or immemorial social usages of India. Such practices as *thagi*, or *meria* sacrifices, or female infanticide, or, above all, *sati*, had been left undisturbed by the earlier rulers of British India, because they feared that interference with them would be resented as an infraction of Indian custom or religion. They were now boldly attacked, and practically abolished, without evil result.

Alongside of this new courage in measures that seemed to be dictated by the moral ideas of the West, there was to be seen growing throughout this period a new temper of respect for Indian civilisation and a desire to study and understand it, and to safeguard its best features. The study of early Indian literature, law, and religious philosophy had indeed been begun in the eighteenth century by Sir William Jones and Nathaniel Halhed, with the ardent encouragement of Warren Hastings. But in this as in other respects Hastings was ahead of the political opinion of his time; the prevalent idea was that the best thing for India would be the introduction, so far as possible, of British methods. This led to the absurdities of the Supreme Court, established in 1773 to

administer English law to Indians. It led also to the great blunder of Cornwallis's settlement of the land question in Bengal, which was an attempt to assimilate the Indian land-system to that of England, and resulted in an unhappy weakening of the village communities, the most healthy features of Indian rural life. In the nineteenth century this attitude was replaced by a spirit of respect for Indian traditions and methods of organisation, and by a desire to retain and strengthen their best features. The new attitude was perhaps to be seen at its best in the work of Mountstuart Elphinstone, a great administrator who was also a profound student of Indian history, and a very sympathetic observer and friend of Indian customs and modes of life. But the same spirit was exemplified by the whole of the remarkable generation of statesmen of whom Elphinstone was one. They established the view that it was the duty of the British power to reorganise India, indeed, but to reorganise it on lines in accordance with its own traditions. Above all, the principle was in this generation very definitely established that India, like other great dependencies, must be administered in the interests of its own people, and not in the interests of the ruling race. That seems to us to-day a platitude. It would not have seemed a platitude in the eighteenth century, or in any earlier period of European expansion. And it may safely be said that the enunciation of such a doctrine would have seemed merely absurd in any of the earlier

historical empires. In 1833 an official report laid before the British parliament contained these remarkable words: 'It is recognised as an indisputable principle, that the interests of the Native Subjects are to be consulted in preference to those of Europeans, wherever the two come in competition.' In all the records of imperialism it would be hard to find a parallel to this formal statement of policy by the supreme government of a ruling race. When such a statement could be made, it is manifest that the meaning of the word Empire had undergone a remarkable transformation. No one can read the history of British rule in India during this period without feeling that, in spite of occasional lapses, this was its real spirit.

But the most powerful constructive element in the shaping of the new imperial policy of Britain was the strength of the belief in the idea of self-government, as not only morally desirable but practically efficacious, which was to be perceived at work in the political circles of Britain during this age. Self-government had throughout the modern age been a matter of habit and practice with the British peoples; now it became a matter of theory and belief. And from this resulted a great change of attitude towards the problems of colonial administration. The American problem in the eighteenth century had arisen ultimately out of the demand of the Americans for unqualified and responsible control over their own affairs: the attitude of the Englishman in

reply to this demand (though he never clearly analysed it) was, in effect, that self-government was a good and desirable thing, but that on the scale on which the Americans claimed it, it would be fatal to the unity of the Empire, and the unity of the Empire must come first. Faced by similar problems in the nineteenth century, the Englishman's response generally was that self-government on the fullest scale was the right of all who were fit to exercise it, and the most satisfactory working solution of political problems. Therefore the right must be granted; and the unity of the Empire must take care of itself. No doubt this attitude was more readily adopted because of the widespread belief that in fact the colonies would all sooner or later cut their connection with the mother-country. But it was fully shared by men who did not hold this view, and who believed strongly in the possibility and desirability of maintaining imperial unity. It was shared, for example, by Wakefield, a convinced imperialist if ever there was one, and by that great colonial administrator, Sir George Grey. It was shared by Lord Durham and by Lord John Russell, who were largely responsible for the adoption of the new policy. Their belief and hope was that the common possession of free institutions of kindred types would in fact form the most effective tie between the lands which enjoyed them. This hope obtained an eloquent expression in the speech in which, in 1852, Russell introduced the bill for granting to the Australian

colonies self-government on such a scale as amounted almost to independence. It is not true, as is sometimes said, that the self-governing institutions of the colonies were established during this period owing to the indifference of the home authorities, and their readiness to put an end to the connection. The new policy of these years was deliberately adopted; and although its acceptance by parliament was rendered easier by the prevalence of disbelief in the permanence of the imperial tie, yet, on the part of the responsible men, it was due to far-sighted statesmanship.

The critical test of the new colonial policy, and the most dramatic demonstration of its efficacy, were afforded by Canada, where, during the thirties, the conditions which preceded the revolt of the American colonies were being reproduced with curious exactness. The self-governing institutions established in the Canadian colonies in 1791 very closely resembled those of the American colonies before the revolution: they gave to the representative houses control over taxation and legislation, but neither control over, nor responsibility for, the executive. And the same results were following. Incomplete self-government was striving after its own fulfilment: the denial of responsibility was producing irresponsibility. There was the same unceasing friction between governors and their councils on the one hand, and the representative bodies on the other hand; and the assemblies were showing the same un-

reasonableness in refusing to meet manifest public obligations. This state of things was becoming steadily more acute in all the colonies, but it was at its worst in the province of Quebec, where the constitutional friction was embittered by a racial conflict, the executive body being British, while the great majority of the assembly was French; and the conflict was producing a very dangerous alienation between the two peoples. The French colonists had quite forgotten the gratitude they had once felt for the maintenance of their religion and of their social organisation, and there was a strong party among them who were bent upon open revolt, and hoped to be able to establish a little isolated French community upon the St. Lawrence. This party of hotheads got the upper hand, and their agitation culminated in the rebellion of Papineau in 1837. In the other colonies, and especially in Upper Canada, the conditions were almost equally ominous; when Papineau revolted in Quebec, William Mackenzie led a sympathetic rising in Ontario. The situation was quite as alarming as the situation in the American colonies had been in 1775. It is true that the risings were easily put down. But mere repression formed no solution, any more than a British victory in 1775 would have formed a solution of the American question.

Realising this, the Whig government sent out Lord Durham, one of their own number, to report on the whole situation. Durham was one of the

most advanced Liberals in Britain, a convinced believer in the virtues of self-government, and he took out with him two of the ablest advocates of scientific colonisation, Edward Gibbon Wakefield and Charles Buller. Durham's administrative work was not a success: his high-handed deportation of some of the rebel leaders was strongly condemned, and he was very quickly recalled. But he had had time to study and understand the situation, and he presented a masterly *Report on Canada*, which is one of the classics in the history of British imperialism. His explanation of the unhappy condition of Canadian politics was not (as some were tempted to say) that the colonists had been given too much liberty, but that they had not been given enough. They must be made to feel their responsibility for the working of the laws which they adopted, and for the welfare of the whole community. As for the conflict of races, its only cure was that both should be made to feel their common responsibility for the destinies of the community in which both must remain partners.

Lord Durham's recommendations were fully carried into effect, partly in the Canada Act of 1840, but more especially by a simple instruction issued to governors, that their ministries must henceforward be chosen, in the British fashion, on the ground that they commanded the support of a majority in the elected house; and that the governors themselves must be guided by their advice. A crucial test of this new policy came in

1849, when the ministers and the parliamentary majority proposed to vote compensation for property destroyed in 1837. This to many seemed compensation for rebels, and the indignant loyalists were urgent that the governor, Lord Elgin, should veto it. He firmly declined to do so; and thus gave an invaluable lesson to both parties. The Canadian people, acting through their representatives, were now responsible for their actions. If they chose to vote for irresponsible and dangerous devices, they must henceforward realise that they must themselves answer for the consequences.

Thus, within a few years of the outbreak of rebellion in two provinces, full power had been entrusted to the rebels themselves. It was a daring policy, only to be justified by a very confident belief in the virtues of self-government. But it was completely and triumphantly successful. Henceforward friction between the Canadian colonies and the mother-country ceased: if there were grounds for complaint in the state of Canadian affairs, the Canadians must now blame their own ministers, and the remedy lay in their own hands. And what was the outcome? Twenty years later the various colonies, once as full of mutual jealousies as the American colonies had been before 1775, began to discuss the possibility of federation. With the cordial approval and co-operation of the home government, they drew up a scheme for the formation of a united Dominion of Canada, including distant British Columbia and the coastal colonies of Nova

Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island; and the adoption of this scheme, in 1867, turned Canada from a bundle of separate settlements into a great state. To this state the home government later made over the control of all the vast and rich lands of the North-West, and so the destinies of half a continent passed under its direction. It was a charge, the magnitude and challenge of which could not but bring forth all that there was of statesmanship among the Canadian people; and it has not failed to do so.

One feature of Canadian constitutional development remains to be noted. It might have been expected that the Canadians would have been tempted to follow the political model of their great neighbour the United States; and if their development had been the outcome of friction with the mother-country, no doubt they would have done so. But they preferred to follow the British model. The keynote of the American system is division of power: division between the federal government and the state governments, which form mutual checks upon one another; division between the executive and the legislature, which are independent of one another at once in the states and in the federal government, both being directly elected by popular vote. The keynote of the British system is concentration of responsibility by the subordination of the executive to the legislature. The Canadians adopted the British principle: what had formerly been distinct colonies became, not 'states' but 'pro-

vinces,' definitely subordinated to the supreme central government; and whether in the federal or in the provincial system, the control of government by the representative body was finally established. This concord with the British system is a fact of real import. It means that the political usages of the home-country and the great Dominion are so closely assimilated that political co-operation between them is far easier than it otherwise might be; it increases the possibility of a future link more intimate than that of mere co-operation.

Not less whole-hearted or generous than the treatment of the problems of Canadian government was the treatment of the same problem in Australia. Here, as a matter of course, all the colonies had been endowed, at the earliest possible date, with the familiar system of representative but not responsible government. No such acute friction as had occurred in Canada had yet shown itself, though signs of its development were not lacking. But in 1852 an astonishing step was taken by the British parliament: the various Australian colonies were empowered to elect single-chamber constituent assemblies to decide the forms of government under which they wished to live. They decided in every case to reproduce as nearly as possible the British system: legislatures of two chambers, with ministries responsible to them. Thus, in Australia as in Canada, the daughter-peoples were made to feel the community of their institutions with those of the

mother-country, and the possibility of intimate and easy co-operation was increased. Two years later, in 1854, New Zealand was endowed with the same system. Among all the British realms in which the white man was predominant, only South Africa was as yet excluded from this remarkable development. The reasons for this exclusion we have already noted: its consequences will occupy our attention in later pages.

Very manifestly the empire which was developing on such lines was not an empire in the old sense—a dominion imposed by force upon unwilling subjects. That old word, which has been used in so many senses, was being given a wholly new connotation. It was being made to mean a free partnership of self-governing peoples, held together not by force, but in part by common interests, and in a still higher degree by common sentiment and the possession of the same institutions of liberty.

In the fullest sense, however, this new conception of empire applied only to the group of the great self-governing colonies. There were many other regions, even before 1878, included within the British Empire, though as yet it had not incorporated those vast protectorates over regions peopled by backward races which have been added during the last generation. There were tropical settlements like British Honduras, British Guiana, Sierra Leone, and Cape Coast Castle; there were many West Indian Islands, and scattered possessions like Mauritius and

Hong-Kong and Singapore and the Straits Settlements; there were garrison towns or coaling-stations like Gibraltar, Malta, Aden, St. Helena. To none of these were the institutions of full responsible self-government granted. Some of them possessed representative institutions without responsible ministries; in others the governor was assisted by a nominated council, intended to express local opinion, but not elected by the inhabitants; in yet others the governor ruled autocratically. But in all these cases the ultimate control of policy was retained by the home government. And in this general category, as yet, the South African colonies were included. Why were these distinctions drawn? Why did the generation of British statesmen, who had dealt so generously with the demand for self-government in Canada and Australia, stop short and refuse to carry out their principles in these other cases?

It is characteristic of British politics that they are never merely or fully logical, and that even when political doctrines seem to enjoy the most complete ascendancy, they are never put into effect without qualifications or exceptions. The exceptions already named to the establishment of full self-government were due to many and varying causes. In the first place, there was in most of these cases no effective demand for full self-government; and it may safely be asserted that any community in which there is no demand for self-governing institutions is probably not in a

condition to work them with effect. Some of these possessions were purely military posts, like Gibraltar and Aden, and were necessarily administered as such. Others were too small and weak to dream of assuming the full privileges. But in the majority of cases one outstanding common feature will appear on closer analysis. Nearly all these territories were tropical or semi-tropical lands, whose British inhabitants were not permanent settlers, but were present solely for the purposes of trade or other exploitation, while the bulk of the population consisted of backward peoples, whose traditions and civilisation rendered their effective participation in public affairs quite impracticable. In such cases, to have given full political power to the small and generally shifting minority of white men would have been to give scope to many evils; and to have enfranchised, on a mere theory, the mass of the population would have been to produce still worse results. It would have sentenced these communities to the sort of fate which has befallen the beautiful island of Hayti, where the self-government of a population of emancipated negro slaves has brought nothing but anarchy and degradation. In such conditions the steady Reign of Law is the greatest boon that can be given to white settlers and coloured subjects alike; and the final authority is rightly retained by the home government, inspired, as British opinion has long required that it should be, by the principle that the rights of the backward

peoples must be safeguarded. Under this system, both law and a real degree of liberty are made possible; whereas under a doctrinaire application of the theory of self-government, both would vanish.

But there remains the vast dominion of India, which falls neither into the one category nor into the other. Though there are many primitive and backward elements among its vast population, there are also peoples and castes whose members are intellectually capable of meeting on equal terms the members of any of the ruling races of the West. Yet during this age, when self-government on the amplest scale was being extended to the chief regions of the British Empire, India, the greatest dominion of them all, did not obtain the gift of representative institutions even on the most modest scale. Why was this ?

It was not because the ruling race was hostile to the idea, or desired merely to retain its own ascendancy. On the contrary, both in Britain and among the best of the British administrators in India, it was increasingly held that the only ultimate justification for the British power in India would be that under its guidance the Indian peoples should be gradually enabled to govern themselves. As early as 1824, when in Europe sheer reaction was at its height, this view was being strongly urged by one of the greatest of Anglo-Indian administrators, Sir Thomas Munro, a soldier of distinction, then serving as governor

of Madras. 'We should look upon India,' he wrote, 'not as a temporary possession, but as one which is to be maintained permanently, until the natives shall have abandoned most of their superstitions and prejudices, and become sufficiently enlightened to frame a regular government for themselves, and to conduct and preserve it. Whenever such a time shall arrive, it will probably be best for both countries that the British control over India should be gradually withdrawn. That the desirable change contemplated may in some after age be effected in India, there is no cause to despair. Such a change was at one time in Britain itself at least as hopeless as it is here. When we reflect how much the character of nations has always been influenced by that of governments, and that some, once the most cultivated, have sunk into barbarism, while others, formerly the rudest, have attained the highest point of civilisation, we shall see no reason to doubt that if we pursue steadily the proper measures, we shall in time so far improve the character of our Indian subjects as to make them able to govern and protect themselves.'

In other words, self-government was the desirable end to be pursued in India as elsewhere; but in India there were many and grave obstacles to its efficient working, which could only slowly be overcome. In the first place, India is more deeply divided in race, language, and religion than any other region of the world. Nowhere else is there such a medley of peoples of every

grade of development, from the almost savage Bhil to the cultivated and high-bred Brahmin or Rajput or Mahomedan chief. There are sharp regional differences, as great as those between the European countries; but cutting across these there are everywhere the rigid and impermeable distinctions of caste, which have no parallel anywhere else in the world. The experience of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, whose confusion of races is simplicity itself in comparison with the chaos of India, affords a significant demonstration of the fact that parliamentary institutions, if they are established among deeply divided peoples, must almost inevitably be exploited for the purpose of racial ascendancy by the most vigorous or the best-organised elements among the people; and a very ugly tyranny is apt to result, as it has resulted in Austro-Hungary. This consequence would almost certainly follow the establishment of a full representative system in India. In the cities of mediæval Italy, when the conflict of parties became so acute that neither side could expect justice from the other, the practice grew up of electing a *podesta* from some foreign city to act as an impartial arbiter. The British power in India has played the part of a *podesta* in restraining and mediating between the conflicting peoples and religions of India.

But again (and this is even more fundamental), for thousands of years the history of India has been one long story of conquests and tyrannies by successive ruling races. Always Might has

been Right, so that the lover of righteousness could only pursue it, like the mediæval ascetic, by cutting himself off from the world, abjuring all social ties, and immolating the flesh in order to live by the spirit. Always Law had been, in the last resort, the Will of the Stronger, not the decree of impartial justice. Always the master-races, the predatory bands, the ruling castes, had expected to receive, and the mass of the people had been accustomed to give, the most abject submission; and these habits were difficult to overcome. 'In England,' says Sir Thomas Munro, 'the people resist oppression, and it is their spirit which gives efficacy to the law: in India the people rarely resist oppression, and the law intended to secure them from it can therefore derive no aid from themselves. . . . It is in vain to caution them against paying by telling them that the law is on their side, and will support them in refusing to comply with unauthorised demands. All exhortations on this head are thrown away, and after listening to them they will the very next day submit to extortion as quietly as before.' How could representative institutions be expected to work under such conditions? They would have lacked the very foundation upon which alone they can firmly rest: respect for law, and public co-operation in the enforcement of it. Thus the supreme service which the government of India could render to its people was the establishment and maintenance of the Reign of Law, and of the liberty which it

shelters. In such conditions representative government would be liable to bring, not liberty, but anarchy and the renewal of lawless oppression.

But although the extension of the representative system to India neither was nor could be attempted in this age, very remarkable advances were made towards turning India in a real sense into a self-governing country. It ceased to be regarded or treated as a subject dominion existing solely for the advantage of its conquerors. That had always been its fate in all the long centuries of its history; and in the first period of British rule the trading company which had acquired this amazing empire had naturally regarded it as primarily a source of profit. In 1833 the company was forbidden to engage in trade, and the profit-making motive disappeared. The shareholders still continued to receive a fixed dividend out of the Indian revenues, but this may be compared to a fixed debt-charge, an annual payment for capital expended in the past; and it came to an end when the company was abolished in 1858. Apart from this dividend, no sort of tribute was exacted from India by the ruling power. India was not even required to contribute to the upkeep of the navy, which protected her equally with the rest of the Empire, or of the diplomatic service, which was often concerned with her interests. She paid for the small army which guarded her frontiers; but if any part of it was borrowed for service abroad, its whole pay and charges were met by Britain.

She paid the salaries and pensions of the handful of British administrators who conducted her government, but this was a very small charge in comparison with the lavish outlay of the native princes whom they had replaced. India had become a self-contained state, whose whole resources were expended exclusively upon her own needs, and expended with the most scrupulous honesty, and under the most elaborate safeguards.

They were expended, moreover, especially during the later part of this period, largely in equipping her with the material apparatus of modern civilisation. Efficient police, great roads, a postal service cheaper than that of any other country, a well-planned railway system, and, above all, a gigantic system of irrigation which brought under cultivation vast regions hitherto desert—these were some of the boons acquired by India during the period. They were rendered possible partly by the economical management of her finances, partly by the liberal expenditure of British capital. Above all, the period saw the beginning of a system of popular education, of which the English language became the main vehicle, because none of the numerous recognised vernacular tongues of India yet possessed the necessary literature, or could be used as a medium for instruction in modern science. In 1858 three universities were established; and although their system was ill-devised, under the malign influence of the analogy of London Uni-

versity, a very large and increasing number of young graduates, trained for modern occupations, began to filter into Indian society, and to modify its point of view. All speaking and writing English, and all trained in much the same body of ideas, they possessed a similarity of outlook and a vehicle of communication such as had never before linked together the various races and castes of India. This large and growing class, educated in some measure in the learning of the West, formed already, at the end of the period, a very important new element in the life of India. They were capable of criticising the work of their government; they were not without standards of comparison by which to measure its achievements; and, aided by the large freedom granted to the press under the British system, they were able to begin the creation of an intelligent public opinion, which was apt, in its first movements, to be ill-guided and rash, but which was nevertheless a healthy development. That this newly created class of educated men should produce a continual stream of criticism, and that it should even stimulate into existence public discontents, is by no means a condemnation of the system of government which has made these developments possible. On the contrary, it is a proof that the system has had an invigorating effect. For the existence and the expression of discontent is a sign of life; it means that there is an end of that utter docility which marks a people enslaved body and soul. India has never

been more prosperous than she is to-day; she has never before known so impartial a system of justice as she now possesses; and these are legitimate grounds of pride to her rulers. But they may even more justly pride themselves upon the fact that in all her history India has never been so frankly and incessantly critical of her government as she is to-day; never so bold in the aspirations for the future which her sons entertain.

The creation of the new class of Western-educated Indians also facilitated another development which the British government definitely aimed at encouraging: the participation of Indians in the conduct of administration in their own land. The Act of 1833 had laid it down as a fundamental principle that 'no native of the said territories . . . shall by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, or any of them, be disabled from holding any place, office, or employment.' The great majority of the minor administrative posts had always been held by Indians; but until 1833 it had been held that the maintenance of British supremacy required that the higher offices should be reserved to members of the ruling race. This restriction was now abolished; but it was not until the development of the educational system had produced a body of sufficiently trained men that the new principle could produce appreciable results; and even then, the deficiencies of an undeveloped system of training, combined with the racial and religious jealousies which the government of India must

always keep in mind, imposed limitations upon the rapid increase of the number of Indians holding the higher posts. Still, the principle had been laid down, and was being acted upon. And that also constituted a great step towards self-government.

India in 1878 was governed, under the terms of a code of law based upon Indian custom, by a small body of British officials, among whom leading Indians were gradually taking their place, and who worked in detail through an army of minor officials, nearly all of Indian birth, and selected without regard to race or creed. She was a self-contained country whose whole resources were devoted to her own needs. She was prospering to a degree unexampled in her history; she had achieved a political unity never before known to her; she had been given the supreme boon of a just and impartial law, administered without fear or favour; and she had enjoyed a long period of peace, unbroken by any attack from external foes. Here also, as fully as in the self-governing colonies, membership of the British Empire did not mean subjection to the selfish dominion of a master, or the subordination to that master's interests of the vital interests of the community. It meant the establishment among a vast population of the essential gifts of Western civilisation, rational law, and the liberty which exists under its shelter. Empire had come to mean, not merely domination pursued for its own sake, but trusteeship for the extension of civilisation.

The period of practical British monopoly, 1815-1878, had thus brought about a very remarkable transformation in the character of the British Empire. It had greatly increased in extent, and by every test of area, population, and natural resources, it was beyond comparison the greatest power that had ever existed in the world. But its organisation was of an extreme laxity; it possessed no real common government; and its principal members were united rather by a community of institutions and ideas than by any formal ties. Moreover, it presented a more amazing diversity of racial types, of religions, and of grades of civilisation, than any other political fabric which had existed in history. Its development had assuredly brought about a very great expansion of the ideas of Western civilisation over the face of the globe, and, above all, a remarkable diffusion of the institutions of political liberty. But it remained to be proved whether this loosely compacted bundle of states possessed any real unity, or would be capable of standing any severe strain. The majority of observers, both in Britain itself and throughout the world, would have been inclined, in 1878, to give a negative answer to these questions.

VII

THE ERA OF THE WORLD-STATES, 1878-1900

I

The Congress of Berlin in 1878 marks the close of the era of nationalist revolutions and wars in Europe. By the same date all the European states had attained to a certain stability in their constitutional systems. With equal definiteness this year may be said to mark the opening of a new era in the history of European imperialism ; an era of eager competition for the control of the still unoccupied regions of the world, in which the concerns of remote lands suddenly became matters of supreme moment to the great European powers, and the peace of the world was endangered by questions arising in China or Siam, in Morocco or the Soudan, or the islands of the Pacific. The control of Europe over the non-European world was in a single generation completed and confirmed. And the most important of the many questions raised by this development was the question whether the spirit in which this world-supremacy of Europe was to be wielded should be the spirit which long experience had inspired in the oldest of the colonising nations, the spirit of trusteeship on behalf of civilisation ; or whether it was to be the old, brutal, and sterile spirit of mere domination for its own sake.

The most obvious feature of this strenuous period was that all the remaining unexploited regions of the world were either annexed by one or other of the great Western states, or were driven to adopt, with greater or less success, the modes of organisation of the West. But what was far more important than any new demarcation of the map was that not only the newly annexed lands, but also the half-developed territories of earlier European dominions, were with an extraordinary devouring energy penetrated during this generation by European traders and administrators, equipped with railways, steamboats, and all the material apparatus of modern life, and in general organised and exploited for the purposes of industry and trade. This astonishing achievement was almost as thorough as it was swift. And its result was, not merely that the political control of Europe over the backward regions of the world was strengthened and secured by these means, but that the whole world was turned into a single economic and political unit, no part of which could henceforth dwell in isolation. This might have meant that we should have been brought nearer to some sort of world-order ; but unhappily the spirit in which the great work was undertaken by some, at least, of the nations which participated in it turned this wonderful achievement into a source of bitterness and enmity, and led the world in the end to the tragedy and agony of the Great War.

The causes of this gigantic outpouring of energy

were manifold. The main impelling forces were perhaps economic rather than political. But the economic needs of this strenuous age might have been satisfied without resort to the brutal arbitrament of war: their satisfaction might even have been made the means of diminishing the danger of war. It was the interpretation of these economic needs in terms of an unhappy political theory which led to the final catastrophe.

On a broad view, the final conquest of the world by European civilisation was made possible, and indeed inevitable, by the amazing development of the material aspects of that civilisation during the nineteenth century; by the progressive command over the forces of nature which the advance of science had placed in the hands of man; by the application of science to industry in the development of manufacturing methods and of new modes of communication; and by the intricate and flexible organisation of modern finance. These changes were already in progress before 1878, and were already transforming the face of the world. Since 1878 they have gone forward with such accelerating speed that we have been unable to appreciate the significance of the revolution they were effecting. We have been carried off our feet; and have found it impossible to adjust our moral and political ideas to the new conditions.

The great material achievements of the last two generations have been mainly due to an intense concentration and specialisation of functions among both men of thought and men of action.

But the result of this has been that there have been few to attempt the vitally important task of appreciating the movement of our civilisation as a whole, and of endeavouring to determine how far the political conceptions inherited from an earlier age were valid in the new conditions. For under the pressure of the great transformation political forces also have been transformed, and in all countries political thought is baffled and bewildered by the complexity of the problems by which it is faced. To this in part we owe the dimness of vision which overtook us as we went whirling together towards the great catastrophe. It was only in the glare of a world-conflagration that we began to perceive, in something like their true proportions, the great forces and events which have been shaping our destinies. In the future, if the huge soulless mechanism which man has created is not to get out of hand and destroy him, we must abandon that contempt for the philosopher and the political thinker which we have latterly been too ready to express, and we must recognise that the task of analysing and relating to one another the achievements of the past and the problems of the present is at least as important as the increase of our knowledge and of our dangerous powers by intense and narrow concentration within very limited fields of thought and work.

In the meantime we must observe (however briefly and inadequately) how the dazzling advances of science and industry affected the

conquest of the world by European civilisation, and why it has come about that instead of leading to amity and happiness, they brought us to the most hideous catastrophe in human history.

Science and industry, in the first place, made the conquest and organisation of the world easy. In the first stages of the expansion of Europe the material superiority of the West had unquestionably afforded the means whereby its political ideas and institutions could be made operative in new fields. The invention of ocean-going ships, the use of the mariner's compass, the discovery of the rotundity of the earth, the development of fire-arms—these were the things which made possible the creation of the first European empires ; though these purely material advantages could have led to no stable results unless they had been wielded by peoples possessing a real political capacity. In the same way the brilliant triumphs of modern engineering have alone rendered possible the rapid conquest and organisation of huge undeveloped areas ; the deadly precision of Western weapons has made the Western peoples irresistible ; the wonderful progress of medical science has largely overcome the barriers of disease which long excluded the white man from great regions of the earth ; and the methods of modern finance, organising and making available the combined credit of whole communities, have provided the means for vast enterprises which without them could never have been undertaken.

Then, in the next place, science has found uses

for many commodities which were previously of little value, and many of which are mainly produced in the undeveloped regions of the earth. Some of these, like rubber, or nitrates, or mineral and vegetable oils, have rapidly become quite indispensable materials, consumed by the industrial countries on an immense scale. Accordingly, the more highly industrialised a country is, the more dependent it must be upon supplies drawn from all parts of the world; not only supplies of food for the maintenance of its teeming population, but, even more, supplies of material for its industries. The days when Europe, or even America, could be self-sufficient are gone for ever. And in order that these essential supplies may be available, it has become necessary that all the regions which produce them should be brought under efficient administration. The anarchy of primitive barbarism cannot be allowed to stand in the way of access to these vital necessities of the new world-economy. It is merely futile for well-meaning sentimentalists to talk of the wickedness of invading the inalienable rights of the primitive occupants of these lands: for good or for ill, the world has become a single economic unit, and its progress cannot be stopped out of consideration for the time-honoured usages of uncivilised and backward tribes. Of course it is our duty to ensure that these simple folks are justly treated, led gently into civilisation, and protected from the iniquities of a mere ruthless exploitation, such as, in some regions, we have been compelled to witness. But

Western civilisation has seized the reins of the world, and it will not be denied. Its economic needs drive it to undertake the organisation of the whole world. What we have to secure is that its political principles shall be such as will ensure that its control will be a benefit to its subjects as well as to itself. But the development of scientific industry has made civilised administration, which for the present involves in most regions European control, inevitable throughout the world.

It did not, however, necessarily follow from these premises that the great European states which did not already possess extra-European territories were bound to acquire such lands. So far as their purely economic needs were concerned, it would have been enough that they should have freedom of access, on equal terms with their neighbours, to the sources of the supplies they required. It is quite possible, as events have shown, for a European state to attain very great success in the industrial sphere without possessing any political control over the lands from which its raw materials are drawn, or to which its finished products are sold. Norway has created an immense shipping industry without owning a single port outside her own borders. The manufactures of Switzerland are as thriving as these of any European country, though Switzerland does not possess any colonies. Germany found it possible to create a vast and very prosperous industry, though her colonial possessions were small, and contributed scarcely at all to her wealth. Her merchants and

capitalists found the most profitable fields for their enterprises, not in their own colonies, but in South and Central America, and in India and the other vast territories of the British Empire, which were open to them as freely as to British merchants. All that the prosperity of European industry required was that the sources of supply should be under efficient administration, and that access to them should be open. And these conditions were fulfilled, before the great rush began, over the greater part of the earth.

If in 1878, when the European nations suddenly awoke to the importance of the non-European world, they had been able to agree upon some simple principle which would have secured equal treatment to all, how different would have been the fate of Europe and the world! If it could have been laid down, as a principle of international law, that in every area whose administration was undertaken by a European state, the 'open door' should be secured for the trade of all nations equally, and that this rule should continue in force until the area concerned acquired the status of a distinctly organised state controlling its own fiscal system, the industrial communities would have felt secure, the little states quite as fully as the big states. Moreover, since, under these conditions, the annexation of territory by a European state would not have threatened the creation of a monopoly, but would have meant the assumption of a duty on behalf of civilisation, the acrimonies and jealousies which attended the process of

partition would have been largely conjured away. In 1878 such a solution would have presented few difficulties. For at that date the only European state which controlled large undeveloped areas was Britain; and Britain, as we have seen, had on her own account and in her own interest arrived at this solution, and had administered, as she still administers, all those regions of her Empire which do not possess self-governing rights in the spirit of the principle we have suggested.

Why was it that this solution, or some solution on these lines, was not then adopted, and had no chance of being adopted? It was because some of the European states were still dominated by a political theory which forbade their taking such a view. We may call this theory the Doctrine of Power. It is the doctrine that the highest duty of every state is to aim at the extension of its own power, and that before this duty every other consideration must give way. The Doctrine of Power has never received a more unflinching expression than it received from the German Treitschke, whose influence was at its height during the years of the great rush for extra-European possessions. The advocate of the Doctrine of Power is not, and cannot be, satisfied with equality of opportunity; he demands supremacy, he demands monopoly, he aims at self-sufficiency, and regards competitors as potential enemies. It would not be just to say that this doctrine was influential only in Germany; it was potent everywhere, especially in this

period, which was the period *par excellence* of 'imperialism' in the bad sense of the term. It was present in the Britain of the flamboyant 'nineties. It provided the chief motive of the strenuous energy with which France was building up her vast African empire. It dictated the policy of the Russian despotism. But it was especially strong in Germany, because the modern history of Germany, more clearly than that of any other country, seemed to demonstrate that the unflinching pursuit of power was the true path to prosperity.

It was in the light of this doctrine that the demands of the new scientific industry were interpreted. Hag-ridden by this conception, when the statesmen of Europe awoke to the importance of the non-European world, it was not primarily the economic needs of their countries that they thought of, for these were, on the whole, not inadequately met: what struck their imagination was that, in paying no attention to the outer world, they had missed great opportunities of increasing their power.

II

When the peoples of Western and Central Europe, no longer engrossed by the problems of Nationalism and Liberalism, cast their eyes over the world, lo! the scale of things seemed to have changed. Just as, in the fifteenth century, civilisation had suddenly passed from the stage of the

city-state or the feudal principality to the stage of the great nation-state, so now, while the European peoples were still struggling to realise their nationhood, civilisation seemed to have stolen a march upon them, and to have advanced once more, this time into the stage of the world-state. For to the east of the European nations lay the vast Russian Empire, stretching from Central Europe across Asia to the Pacific ; and in the west the American Republic extended from ocean to ocean, across three thousand miles of territory ; and between these and around them spread the British Empire, sprawling over the whole face of the globe, on every sea and in every continent. In contrast with these giant empires, the nation-states of Europe felt themselves out of scale, just as the Italian cities in the sixteenth century must have felt themselves out of scale in comparison with the new nation-states of Spain and France. To achieve the standard of the world-state, to make their own nations the controlling factors in wide dominions which should include territories and populations of varied types, became the ambition of the most powerful European states. A new political ideal had captivated the mind of Europe.

These powerful motives were reinforced by others which arose from the development of affairs within Europe itself. In the first place, the leading European states had by 1878 definitely abandoned that tendency towards free trade which had seemed to be increasing in strength during the

previous generation; and, largely in the hope of combating the overwhelming mercantile and industrial supremacy of Britain, had adopted the fiscal policy of protection. The ideal of the protectionist creed is national self-sufficiency in the economic sphere. But, as we have seen, economic self-sufficiency was no longer attainable in the conditions of modern industry by any European state. Only by large foreign annexations, especially in the tropical regions, did it seem possible of achievement. But when a protectionist state begins to acquire territory, the anticipation that it will use its power to exclude or destroy the trade of its rivals must drive other states to safeguard themselves by still further annexations. It was largely this fear which drove Britain, in spite of, or perhaps because of, her free trade theories, into a series of large annexations in regions where her trade had been hitherto predominant.

Again, the most perturbing feature of the relations between the European powers also contributed to produce an eagerness for colonial possessions. Europe had entered upon the era of huge national armies; the example of Prussia, and the rancours which had been created by her policy, had set all the nations arming themselves. They had learned to measure their strength by their available man-power, and in two ways the desire to increase the reserve of military manhood formed a motive for colonisation. In the first place, the surplus manhood of a nation was lost to it if it was allowed to pass under an alien flag by emigration.

Those continental states from which emigration took place on a large scale began to aspire after the possession of colonies of their own, where their emigrants could still be kept under control, and remain subject to the obligations of service. Germany, the state which beyond all others measured its strength by its fighting man-power, was most affected by this motive, which formed the chief theme of the colonial school among her politicians and journalists, and continued to be so even when the stream of her emigrants had dwindled to very small proportions. In a less degree, Italy was influenced by the same motive. In the second place, conquered subjects even of backward races might be made useful for the purposes of war. This motive appealed most strongly to France. Her home population was stationary. She lived in constant dread of a new onslaught from her formidable neighbour; she watched with alarm the rapid increase of that neighbour's population, and the frequent increases in the numbers of his armies; and she hoped to reach an equipoise by arming the subject populations of her new empire.

Thus the political situation in Europe had a very direct influence upon the colonising activity of this period. The dominant fact of European politics during this generation was the supreme prestige and influence of Germany, who, not content with an unquestioned military superiority over any other single power, had buttressed herself by the formation (1879 and 1882) of the most formidable standing alliance that has ever existed

in European history, and dominated European politics. France, having been hurled from the leadership of Europe in 1870, dreaded nothing so much as the outbreak of a new European war, in which she must be inevitably involved, and in which she might be utterly ruined. She strove to find a compensation for her wounded pride in colonial adventures, and therefore became, during the first part of the period, the most active of the powers in this field. She was encouraged to adopt this policy by Bismarck, partly in the hope that she might thus forget Alsace, partly in order that she might be kept on bad terms with Britain, whose interests seemed to be continually threatened by her colonising activity.

Bismarck himself took little interest in colonial questions, except in so far as they could be used as a means of alienating the other powers from one another, and so securing the European hegemony of Germany. He therefore at first made no attempt to use the dominant position of Germany as a means of acquiring extra-European dominions. But the younger generation in Germany was far from sharing this view. It was determined to win for Germany a world-empire, and in 1884 and the following years—rather late in the day, when most of the more desirable territories were already occupied—it forced Bismarck to annex large areas. After Bismarck's fall, in 1890, this party got the upper hand in German politics, and the creation of a world-empire became the supreme aim of William II. and his

advisers. The formidable power of Germany began to be systematically employed not merely for the maintenance of her hegemony in Europe, but for the acquisition of a commanding position in the outer world; and since this could scarcely be attained except by violence, the world being now almost completely partitioned, Germany's new and quite natural ambitions added to the difficulty of world-politics.

Among the other powers which participated in the great partition, Russia continued her pressure in two of the three directions which she had earlier followed—south-eastwards in Central Asia, eastwards towards China. In both directions her activity aroused the nervous fears of Britain, while her pressure upon China helped to bring Japan into the ranks of the militant and aggressive powers. But Russia took no interest in the more distant quarters of the world. Nor did Austria, though there were signs that her old ambition to expand south-eastwards at the expense of Turkey and the Balkan peoples was beginning to revive. Italy, having but recently achieved national unity and taken her place among the Great Powers, felt that she could not be left out of the running, now that extra-European possessions had come to appear an almost essential mark of greatness among states; and, disappointed of Tunis, she endeavoured to find compensation on the shores of the Red Sea. Spain and Portugal, in the midst of all these eager rivalries, were tempted to furbish up their old and half-dormant claims.

Even the United States of America joined in the rush during the fevered period of the 'nineties.

Lastly, Britain, the oldest and the most fully endowed of all the colonising powers, was drawn, half unwilling, into the competition; and having an immense start over her rivals, actually acquired more new territory than any of them. She was, indeed, like the other states, passing through an 'imperialist' phase in these years. The value attached by other countries to oversea possessions awakened among the British people a new pride in their far-spread dominions. Disraeli, who was in the ascendant when the period opened, had forgotten his old opinion of the uselessness of colonies, and had become a prophet of Empire. An Imperial Federation Society was founded in 1878. The old unwillingness to assume new responsibilities died out, or diminished; and the rapid annexations of other states, especially France, in regions where British influence had hitherto been supreme, and whose chieftains had often begged in vain for British protection, aroused some irritation. The ebullient energy of the colonists themselves, especially in South Africa and Australia, demanded a forward policy. Above all, the fact that the European powers, now so eager for colonial possessions, had all adopted the protectionist policy aroused a fear lest British traders should find themselves shut out from lands whose trade had hitherto been almost wholly in their hands; and the militant and aggressive temper sometimes shown by the agents of these

powers awakened some nervousness regarding the safety of the existing British possessions. Hence Britain, after a period of hesitancy, became more active than any of the other states in annexation. Throughout this period her main rival was France, whose new claims seemed to come in conflict with her own in almost every quarter of the globe. This rivalry produced acute friction, which grew in intensity until it reached its culminating point in the crisis of Fashoda in 1898, and was not removed until the settlement of 1904 solved all the outstanding difficulties. It would be quite untrue to say that Britain deliberately endeavoured to prevent or to check the rapid colonial expansion of France. The truth is that British trading interests had been predominant in many of the regions where the French were most active, and that the protectionist policy which France had adopted stimulated into a new life the ancient rivalry of these neighbour and sister nations. Towards the colonial ambitions of Germany, and still more of Italy, Britain was far more complaisant.

III

It is difficult to give in a brief space a clear summary of the extremely complicated events and intrigues of this vitally important period. But perhaps it will be easiest if we consider in turn the regions in which the strenuous rivalries of the powers displayed themselves. The most important was Africa, which lay invitingly near

to Europe, and was the only large region of the world which was still for the most part unoccupied. Here all the competitors, save Russia, Japan, and America, played a part. Western Asia formed a second field, in which three powers only, Russia, Germany, and Britain, were immediately concerned. The Far East, where the vast Empire of China seemed to be falling into decrepitude, afforded the most vexed problems of the period. Finally, the Pacific Islands were the scene of an active though less intense rivalry.

It is a curious fact that Africa, the continent whose outline was the first outside of Europe itself to be fully mapped out by the European peoples, was actually the last to be effectively brought under the influence of European civilisation. This was because the coasts of Africa are for the most part inhospitable; its vast interior plateau is almost everywhere shut off either by belts of desert land, or by swampy and malarious regions along the coast; even its great rivers do not readily tempt the explorer inland, because their course is often interrupted by falls or rapids not far from their mouths, where they descend from the interior plateau to the coastal plain; and its inhabitants, warlike and difficult to deal with, are also peoples of few and simple wants, who have little to offer to the trader. Hence eight generations of European mariners had circumnavigated the continent without seriously attempting to penetrate its central mass; and apart from the Anglo-Dutch settlements at the Southern ex-

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tremity, the French empire in Algeria in the north, a few trading centres on the West Coast, and some half-derelict Portuguese stations in Angola and Mozambique, the whole continent remained available for European exploitation in 1878.

What trade was carried on, except in Egypt, in Algeria, and in the immediate vicinity of the old French settlements on the West Coast, was mainly in the hands of British merchants. Over the greater part of the coastal belts only the British power was known to the native tribes and chieftains. Many of them (like the Sultan of Zanzibar and the chiefs of the Cameroons) had repeatedly begged to be taken under British protection, and had been refused. During the two generations before 1878 the interior of the continent had begun to be known. But except in the north and north-west, where French and German explorers had been active, the work had been mainly done by British travellers. Most of the great names of African exploration—Livingstone, Burton, Speke, Baker, Cameron and the Anglo-American Stanley—were British names. These facts, of course, gave to Britain, already so richly endowed, no sort of claim to a monopoly of the continent. But they naturally gave her a right to a voice in its disposal.

These facts bring out one feature which differentiated the settlement of Africa from that of any other region of the non-European world. It was not a gradual, but an extraordinarily rapid achievement. It was based not upon claims

established by work already done, but, for the most part, upon the implicit assumption that extra-European empire was the due of the European peoples, simply because they were civilised and powerful.

Africa falls naturally into two great regions. The northern coast, separated from the main mass of the continent by the broad belt of deserts which runs from the Atlantic to the Red Sea, has always been far more intimately connected with the other Mediterranean lands than with the rest of Africa. Throughout the course of history, indeed, the northern coast-lands have belonged rather to the realms of Western or of Asiatic civilisation than to the primitive barbarism of the sons of Ham. In the days of the Carthaginians and of the Roman Empire, all these lands, from Egypt to Morocco, had known a high civilisation. They were racially as well as historically distinct from the rest of the continent. They had been in name part of the Turkish Empire, and any European interference in their affairs was as much a question of European politics as the problems of the Balkans.

Two countries in this area fell under European direction during the period with which we are concerned, and in each case the effects upon European politics were very great. In 1881 France, with the deliberate encouragement of Bismarck, sent armies into Tunis, and assumed the protectorate of that misgoverned region. She had good grounds for her action. Not only had she large trade-interests in Tunis, but the country

was separated from her earlier dominion in Algeria only by an artificial line, and its disorders increased the difficulty of developing the efficient administration which she had established there. But Italy also had interests in Tunis. There were more Italian than French residents in the country, which is separated from Sicily only by a narrow belt of sea. And Italy, who was beginning to conceive colonial ambitions, had not unnaturally marked down Tunis as her most obvious sphere of influence. The result was to create a long-lived ill-feeling between the two Latin countries. As a consequence of the annexation of Tunis, Italy was persuaded in the next year (1882) to join the Triple Alliance; and France, having burnt her fingers, became chary of colonial adventures in regions that were directly under the eye of Europe. Isolated, insecure, and eternally suspicious of Germany, she could not afford to be drawn into European quarrels. This is in a large degree the explanation of her vacillating action in regard to Egypt.

In Egypt the political influence of France had been preponderant ever since the time of Mehemet Ali; perhaps we should say, ever since the time of Napoleon. And political influence had been accompanied by trading and financial interests. France had a larger share of the trade of Egypt, and had lent more money to the ruling princes of the country, than any other country save England. She had designed and executed the Suez Canal. But this waterway, once opened, was used mainly

by British ships on the way to India, Australia, and the Far East. It became a point of vital strategic importance to Britain, who, though she had opposed its construction, eagerly seized the chance of buying a great block of shares in the enterprise from the bankrupt Khedive. Thus French and British interests in Egypt were equally great; greater than those of all the rest of Europe put together. When the native government of Egypt fell into bankruptcy (1876), the two powers set up a sort of *condominium*, or joint control of the finances, in order to ensure the payment of interest on the Egyptian debt held by their citizens. To bankruptcy succeeded political chaos; and it became apparent that if the rich land of Egypt was not to fall into utter anarchy, there must be direct European intervention. The two powers proposed to take joint action; the rest of Europe assented. But the Sultan of Turkey, as suzerain of Egypt, threatened to make difficulties. At the last moment France, fearful of the complications that might result, and resolute to avoid the danger of European war, withdrew from the project of joint intervention. Britain went on alone; and although she hoped and believed that she would quickly be able to restore order, and thereupon to evacuate the country, found herself drawn into a labour of reconstruction that could not be dropped.

We shall in the next chapter have more to say on the British occupation of Egypt, as part of the British achievement during this period. In the

meanwhile, its immediate result was continuous friction between France and Britain. France could not forgive herself or Britain for the opportunity which she had lost. The embitterment caused by the Egyptian question lasted throughout the period, and was not healed till the Entente of 1904. It intensified and exacerbated the rivalry of the two countries in other fields. It made each country incapable of judging fairly the actions of the other. To wounded and embittered France, the quite honest British explanations of the reasons for delay in evacuating Egypt seemed only so many evidences of hypocrisy masking greed. To Britain the French attitude seemed fractious and unreasonable, and she suspected in every French forward movement in other fields—notably in the Eastern Soudan and the upper valley of the Nile—an attempt to attack or undermine her. Thus Egypt, like Tunis, illustrated the influence of European politics in the extra-European field. The power that profited most was Germany, who had strengthened herself by drawing Italy into the Triple Alliance, and had weakened France by using colonial questions as a means of alienating her from her neighbours. It was, in truth, only from the European point of view that colonial questions had any interest for Bismarck. He was, as he repeatedly asserted almost to the day of his death, 'no colony man.' But the time was at hand when he was to be forced out of this attitude. For already the riches of tropical Africa were beginning to attract the attention of Europe.

IV

The most active and energetic of the powers in tropical Africa was France. From her ancient foothold at Senegal she was already, in the late 'seventies, pushing inland towards the upper waters of the Niger; while further south her vigorous explorer de Brazza was penetrating the hinterland behind the French coastal settlements north of the Congo mouth. Meanwhile the explorations of Livingstone and Stanley had given the world some conception of the wealth of the vast interior. In 1876 Leopold, King of the Belgians, summoned a conference at Brussels to consider the possibility of setting the exploration and settlement of Africa upon an international basis. Its result was the formation of an International African Association, with branches in all the principal countries. But from the first the branches dropped all serious pretence of international action. They became (so far as they exercised any influence) purely national organisations for the purpose of acquiring the maximum amount of territory for their own states. And the central body, after attempting a few unsuccessful exploring expeditions, practically resolved itself into the organ of King Leopold himself, and aimed at creating a neutral state in Central Africa under his protection. In 1878 H. M. Stanley returned from the exploration of the Congo. He was at once invited by King Leopold to undertake the organisation of the Congo basin for his Association, and set out again for that pur-

pose in 1879. But he soon found himself in conflict with the active French agents under de Brazza, who had made their way into the Congo valley from the north-west. And at the same time Portugal, reviving ancient and dormant claims, asserted that the Congo belonged to her. It was primarily to find a solution for these disputes that the Berlin Conference was summoned in December 1884.

Meanwhile the rush for territory was going on furiously in other regions of Africa. Not only on the Congo, but on the Guinea Coast and its hinterland, France was showing an immense activity, and was threatening to reduce to small coastal *enclaves* the old British settlements on this coast. Only the energy shown by a group of British merchants, who formed themselves into a National African Company in 1881, and the vigorous action of their leader, Mr. (afterwards Sir) George Taubman Goldie, prevented the extrusion of British interests from the greater part of the Niger valley, where they had hitherto been supreme. In Madagascar, too, the ancient ambitions of France had revived. Though British trading and missionary activities in the island were at this date probably greater than French, France claimed large rights, especially in the north-east of the island. These claims drew her into a war with the native power of the Hovas, which began in 1883, and ended in 1885 with a vague recognition of French suzerainty.

Again, Italy had, in 1883, obtained her first foothold in Eritrea, on the shore of the Red Sea. And Germany, also, had suddenly made up her mind to

embark upon the career of empire. In 1883 the Bremen merchant, Lüderitz, appeared in South-West Africa, where there were a few German mission stations and trading-centres, and annexed a large area which Bismarck was persuaded to take under the formal protection of Germany. This region had hitherto been vaguely regarded as within the British sphere, but though native chiefs, missionaries, and in 1868 even the Prussian government, had requested Britain to establish a formal protectorate, she had always declined to do so. In the next year another German agent, Dr. Nachtigal, was commissioned by the German government to report on German trade interests on the West Coast, and the British government was formally acquainted with his mission and requested to instruct its agents to assist him. The real purpose of the mission was shown when Nachtigal made a treaty with the King of Togoland, on the Guinea Coast, whereby he accepted German suzerainty. A week later a similar treaty was made with some of the native chiefs in the Cameroons. In this region British interests had hitherto been predominant, and the chiefs had repeatedly asked for British protection, which had always been refused. A little later the notorious Karl Peters, with a few companions disguised as working engineers, arrived at Zanzibar on the East Coast, with a commission from the German Colonial Society to peg out German claims. In the island of Zanzibar British interests had long been overwhelmingly predominant; and the

Sultan, who had large and vague claims to supremacy over a vast extent of the mainland, had repeatedly asked the British government to take these regions under its protectorate. He had always been refused. Peters' luggage consisted largely of draft treaty-forms; and he succeeded in making treaties with native princes (usually unaware of the meaning of the documents they were signing) whereby some 60,000 square miles were brought under German control. The protectorate over these lands had not been accepted by the German government when the Conference of Berlin met. It was formally accepted in the next year (1885). Far from being opposed by Britain, the establishment of German power in East Africa was actually welcomed by the British government, whose foreign secretary, Earl Granville, wrote that his government 'views with favour these schemes, the realisation of which will entail the civilisation of large tracts over which hitherto no European influence has been exercised.' And when a group of British traders began to take action further north, in the territory which later became British East Africa, and in which Peters had done nothing, the British government consulted the German government before licensing their action. Thus before the meeting of the Conference of Berlin the foundations of the German empire in Africa were already laid; the outlines of the vast French empire in the north had begun to appear; and the curious dominion of Leopold of Belgium in the Congo valley had begun to take shape.

The Conference of Berlin (Dec. 1884-Feb. 1885), which marked the close of the first stage in the partition of Africa, might have achieved great things if it had endeavoured to lay down the principles upon which European control over backward peoples should be exercised. But it made no such ambitious attempt. It prescribed the rules of the game of empire-building, ordaining that all protectorates should be formally notified by the power which assumed them to the other powers, and that no annexation should be made of territory which was not 'effectively' occupied; but evidently the phrase 'effective occupation' can be very laxly interpreted. It provided that there should be free navigation of the Congo and Niger rivers, and freedom of trade for all nations within the Congo valley and certain other vaguely defined areas. But it made no similar provision for other parts of Africa; and it whittled away the value of what it did secure by the definite proviso that should parts of these areas be annexed by independent states, the restriction upon their control of trade should lapse. It recognised the illegality of the slave-trade, and imposed upon annexing powers the duty of helping to suppress it; this provision was made much fuller and more definite by a second conference at Brussels in 1890, on the demand of Britain, who had hitherto contended almost alone against the traffic in human flesh. But no attempt was made to define native rights, to safeguard native customs, to prohibit the maintenance of forces larger than

would be necessary for the maintenance of order: in short, no attempt was made to lay down the doctrine that the function of a ruling power among backward peoples is that of a trustee on behalf of its simple subjects and on behalf of civilisation. That the partition of Africa should have been effected without open war, and that the questions decided at Berlin should have been so easily and peacefully agreed upon, seemed at the moment to be a good sign. But the spirit which the conference expressed was not a healthy spirit.

After 1884 the activity of the powers in exploration, annexation, and development became more furious than ever. Britain now began seriously to arouse herself to the danger of exclusion from vast areas where her interests had hitherto been predominant; and it was during these years that all her main acquisitions of territory in Africa were made: Rhodesia and Central Africa in the south, East Africa and Somaliland in the East, Nigeria and the expansion of her lesser protectorates in the West.

To these years also belonged the definite, and most unfortunate, emergence of Italy as a colonising power. She had got a foothold in Eritrea in 1883; in 1885 it was, with British aid, enlarged by the annexation of territory which had once been held by Egypt, but had been abandoned when she lost the Soudan. But the Italian claims in Eritrea brought on conflict with the neighbouring native power of Abyssinia. In spite of a sharp defeat at Dogali in 1887, she succeeded in

holding her own in this conflict; and in 1889 Abyssinia accepted a treaty which Italy claimed to be a recognition of her suzerainty. But the Abyssinians repudiated this interpretation; and in a new war, which began in 1896, inflicted upon the Italians so disastrous a defeat at Adowa that they were constrained to admit the complete independence of Abyssinia—the sole native state which had so far been able to hold its own against the pressure of Europe. Meanwhile in 1889 and the following years Italy had, once more with the direct concurrence of Britain, marked out a new territory in Somaliland.

The main features of the years from 1884 to 1900 were the rapidity with which the territories earlier annexed were expanded and organised, more especially by France. In the 'nineties her dominions extended from the Mediterranean to the Guinea Coast, and she had conceived the ambition of extending them also across Africa from west to east. This ambition led her into a new and more acute conflict with Britain, who, having undertaken the reconquest of the Egyptian Soudan and the upper valley of the Nile, held that she could not permit a rival to occupy the upper waters of the great river, or any part of the territory that belonged to it. Hence when the intrepid explorer, Marchand, after a toilsome expedition which lasted for two years, planted the French flag at Fashoda in 1898, he was promptly disturbed by Kitchener, fresh from the overthrow of the Khalifa and the reconquest of Khartoum, and was

compelled to withdraw. The tension was severe; no episode in the partition of Africa had brought the world so near to the outbreak of a European war. But in the end the dispute was settled by the Anglo-French agreement of 1898, which may be said to mark the conclusion of the process of partition. It was the last important treaty in a long series which filled the twenty years following 1878, and which had the result of leaving Africa, with the exception of Morocco, Tripoli, and Abyssinia, completely divided among the chief European states.

V

Africa was the main field of the ambitions and rivalries of the European powers during this period; the other fields may be more rapidly surveyed.

In Central Asia and the Near East the main features of the period were two. The first was the steady advance of Russia towards the south-east, which awakened acute alarms in Britain regarding India, and led to the adoption of a 'forward policy' among the frontier tribes in the north-west of India. The second was the gradual and silent penetration of Turkey by German influence. Here there was no partition or annexation. But Germany became the political protector of the Turk; undertook the reorganisation of his armies; obtained great commercial concessions; bought up his railways, ousting the earlier British and French concerns which had controlled them, and built new lines. The greatest of these was the

vitally important project of the Bagdad railway, which was taken in hand just before the close of the period. It was a project whose political aims outweighed its commercial aims. But as yet, in 1900, the problems of the Middle East were not very disturbing. The Turkish Empire remained intact; so did the Persian Empire, though both were becoming more helpless, partly owing to the decrepitude of their governments, partly owing to the pressure of European financial and trading interests. As yet the empires of the Middle East seemed to form a region comparatively free from European influence. But this was only seeming. The influence of Europe was at work in them; and it was probably inevitable that some degree of European political tutelage should follow as the only means of preventing the disintegration which must result from the pouring of new wine into the old bottles.

In the Far East—in the vast empire of China—this result seemed to be coming about inevitably and rapidly. The ancient pot-bound civilisation of China had withstood the impact of the West in the mid-nineteenth century without breaking down; but China had made no attempt, such as Japan had triumphantly carried out, to adapt herself to the new conditions, and her system was slowly crumbling under the influence of the European traders, teachers, and missionaries whom she had been compelled to admit. The first of the powers to take advantage of this situation was France, who already possessed a footing in Cochin-

China, and was tempted during the colonial enthusiasm of the 'eighties to transform it into a general supremacy over Annam and Tonking. As early as 1874 she had obtained from the King of Annam a treaty which she interpreted as giving her suzerain powers. The King of Annam himself repudiated this interpretation, and maintained that he was a vassal of China. China took the same view; and after long negotiations a war between France and China broke out. It lasted for four years, and demanded a large expenditure of strength. But it ended (1885) with the formal recognition of French suzerainty over Annam, and a further decline of Chinese prestige.

Ten years later a still more striking proof of Chinese weakness was afforded by the rapid and complete defeat of the vast, ill-organised empire by Japan, the youngest of the Great Powers. The war gave to Japan Formosa and the Pescadores Islands, and added her to the list of imperialist powers. She would have won more still—the Liao-tang Peninsula and a sort of suzerainty over Korea—but that the European powers, startled by the signs of China's decay, and perhaps desiring a share of the plunder, intervened to forbid these annexations, on the pretext of defending the integrity of China. Russia, France, and Germany combined in this step; Britain stood aloof. Japan, unwillingly giving way, and regarding Russia as the chief cause of her humiliation, began to prepare herself for a coming conflict.

As for unhappy China, she was soon to learn how

much sincerity there was in the zeal of Europe for the maintenance of her integrity. In 1896 she was compelled to permit Russia to build a railway across Manchuria; and to grant to France a 'rectification of frontiers' on the south, and the right of building a railway through the province of Yunnan, which lies next to Tonking. The partition of China seemed to be at hand. Britain and America vainly urged upon the other powers that China should be left free to direct her own affairs subject to the maintenance of 'the open door' for European trade. The other powers refused to listen, and in 1897 the beginning of the end seemed to have come. Germany, using as a pretext the murder of two German missionaries, seized the strong place and admirable harbour of Kiao-chau, the most valuable strategic position on the Chinese coast. That she meant to use it as a base for future expansion was shown by her lavish expenditure upon its equipment and fortification. Russia responded by seizing the strong place of Port Arthur and the Liao-tang Peninsula, while every day her hold upon the great province of Manchuria was strengthened. Foreseeing a coming conflict in which her immense trading interests would be imperilled, Britain acquired a naval base on the Chinese coast by leasing Wei-hai-Wei. Thus all the European rivals were clustered round the decaying body of China; and in the last years of the century were already beginning to claim 'spheres of influence,' despite the protests of Britain and America.

But the outburst of the Boxer Rising in 1900—caused mainly by resentment of foreign intervention—had the effect of postponing the rush for Chinese territory. When Britain and Japan made an alliance in 1902 on the basis of guaranteeing the *status quo* in the East, the overwhelming naval strength of the two allies made a European partition of China impracticable; and China was once more given a breathing-space. Only Russia could attack the Chinese Empire by land; and the severe defeat which she suffered at the hands of Japan in 1904-5 removed that danger also. The Far East was left with a chance of maintaining its independence, and of voluntarily adapting itself to the needs of a new age.

The last region in which territories remained available for European annexation consisted of the innumerable archipelagoes of the Pacific Ocean. Here the preponderant influence had been in the hands of Britain ever since the days of Captain Cook. She had made some annexations during the first three quarters of the century, but had on the whole steadfastly refused the requests of many of the island peoples to be taken under her protection. France had, as we have seen, acquired New Caledonia and the Marquesas Islands during the previous period, but her activity in this region was never very great. The only other European power in possession of Pacific territories was Spain, who held the great archipelago of the Philippines, and claimed also the numerous minute islands (nearly six hundred in number)

which are known as Micronesia. When the colonial enthusiasm of the 'eighties began, Germany saw a fruitful field in the Pacific, and annexed the Bismarck Archipelago and the north-eastern quarter of New Guinea. Under pressure from Australia, who feared to see so formidable a neighbour established so near her coastline, Britain annexed the south-eastern quarter of that huge island: the remainder of the island was already held by the Dutch. During the 'nineties the partition of the Pacific Islands was completed, the chief participators being Germany, Britain, and the United States of America.

The entry of America into the race for imperial possessions in its last phase was too striking an event to pass without comment. America annexed Hawaii in 1898, and divided the Samoan group with Germany in 1899. But her most notable departure from her traditional policy of self-imposed isolation from world-politics came when in 1898 she was drawn by the Cuban question into a war with Spain. Its result was the disappearance of the last relics of the Spanish Empire in the New World and in the Pacific. Cuba became an independent republic. Porto Rico was annexed by America. In the Pacific the Micronesian possessions of Spain were acquired by Germany. Germany would fain have annexed also the Philippine Islands. But America resolved herself to assume the task of organising and governing these rich lands; and in doing so made a breach with her traditions. Her new possession necessarily

drew her into closer relations with the problems of the Far East; it gave her also some acquaintance with the difficulty of introducing Western methods among a backward people.

During these years of universal imperialist excitement the spirit of imperialism seemed to have captured America as it had captured the European states; and this was expressed in a new interpretation of the Monroe doctrine, put forth by the Secretary of State during the Venezuela controversy of 1895. 'The United States,' said Mr. Olney, 'is practically sovereign on this continent' (meaning both North and South America), 'and its fiat is law upon the subjects to which it confines its interposition.' No such gigantic imperial claim had ever been put forward by any European state; and it constituted an almost defiant challenge to the imperialist powers of Europe. It may safely be said that this dictum did not represent the settled judgment of the American people. But it did appear, in the last years of the century, as if the great republic were about to emerge from her self-imposed isolation, and to take her natural part in the task of planting the civilisation of the West throughout the world. Had she frankly done so, had she made it plain that she recognised the indissoluble unity and the common interests of the whole world, it is possible that her influence might have eased the troubles of the next period, and exercised a deterrent influence upon the forces of disturbance which were working towards the great catastrophe.

But her traditions were too strong; and after the brief imperialist excitement of the 'nineties, she gradually relapsed once more into something like her old attitude of aloofness.

It is but a cursory and superficial view which we have been able to take of this extraordinary quarter of a century, during which almost the whole world was partitioned among a group of mighty empires, and the whole globe, brought within a single political and economic system which had its centre in Europe, was made dependent upon the course of events in that centre. Few regions had escaped the direct political control of European powers; and most of these few were insensibly falling under the influence of one or other of the powers: Turkey under that of Germany, Persia under that of Russia and Britain. No region of the earth remained exempt from the indirect influence of the European system. The civilisation of the West had completed the domination of the globe; and the interests of the great world-states were so intertwined and intermingled in every corner of the earth that the balance of power among them had become as precarious as was the European balance in the eighteenth century. The era of the world-states had very definitely opened. It remained to be seen in what spirit it was to be used, and whether it was to be of long duration. These two questions are one; for no system can last which is based upon injustice and the denial of right.

VI

At this point we may well stop to survey the new world-states which had been created by this quarter of a century of eager competition.

First among them, in extent and importance, stood the new empire of France. It covered a total area of five million square miles, and in size ranked third in order, coming after the older empires of Russia and Britain. It included some surviving fragments, negligible in extent, of the earlier French Empire, and its most valuable province, Algeria, had been acquired in 1830-48, long before the other European powers had begun to dream of extra-European empire. In truth the French had been the first to conceive the new idea of world-power, largely because of the traditions of the past; they had seen in it the means of restoring their lost prestige in Europe; and they had pursued it with a persistent and devouring energy which no other power rivalled. Thus overwhelmingly the greater part of the French Empire was a mushroom creation, acquired during the short period which has been surveyed in this chapter, and its system of administration was still in the making. In working out this system the French colonial administrators had shown much of the imaginative tact in the handling of alien peoples which their ancestors had displayed in America and India during the eighteenth century. Their traditions had stood them in good stead. And the result was that although

the French Empire had been acquired as the result of a long series of aggressive wars, in Northern Africa, Madagascar and the Far East, it was very little disturbed by unrest or revolt.

But there were two features of the French Empire which were ominous for the future. On the one hand, the French refused even to consider the policy of the 'open door' in their colonies. No colonising power, with the exception of the United States, has pursued an economic policy so rigidly exclusive and monopolist in character. If their policy was to be generally imitated, there was no hope that the expansion of Europe would mean an expansion of opportunities for all the European nations. On the other hand, they pursued from the first the aim of finding among their new subjects military material not only for the extension of their non-European empire, but, if need be, for use in Europe itself. The obligation of military service was imposed upon all the subject peoples. They were trained to arms in numbers far exceeding the needs of local police and defence; and, when the time came, they were used in immense numbers in the European conflict.

The French Empire fell into three main blocks. First, and most important, was the empire of Northern Africa, extending from Algiers to the mouth of the Congo, and from the Atlantic to the valley of the Nile. Next came the rich island of Madagascar; lastly the eastern empire of Annam and Tonking, the beginnings of which dated back to the eighteenth century. A few

inconsiderable islands in the Pacific and the West Indies, acquired long since, a couple of towns in India, memories of the dreams of Dupleix, and the province of French Guiana in South America, which dated back to the seventeenth century, completed the list.

Next may be named the curious dominion of the Congo Free State, occupying the rich heart of the African continent. Nominally it belonged to no European power, but was a recognised neutral territory. In practice it was treated as the personal estate of the Belgian king, Leopold II. Subject to closer international restrictions than any other European domain in the non-European world, the Congo was nevertheless the field of some of the worst iniquities in the exploitation of defenceless natives that have ever disgraced the record of European imperialism. International regulations are no safeguard against misgovernment; the only real sanction is the character and spirit of the government. For the Congo iniquities Leopold II. must be held guilty at the bar of posterity. When he went to his judgment in 1908 this rich realm passed under the direct control of the Belgian government and parliament, and an immediate improvement resulted.

The least successful of the new world-states was that of Italy. Its story was a story of disaster and disappointment. It included some two hundred thousand square miles of territory; but they were hot and arid lands on the inhospitable shores of the Red Sea and in Somaliland.

Italy had as yet no real opportunity of showing how she would deal with the responsibilities of empire.

The most remarkable, in some respects, of all these suddenly acquired empires was that of Germany. It was practically all obtained within a period of three years, without fighting or even serious friction. This easily-won empire was indeed relatively small, being not much over one million square miles, little more than one-fifth of the French dominions. But it was five times as large as Germany itself, and it included territories which were, on the whole, richer than those of France. The comparative smallness of its area was due to the fact that Germany was actually the last to enter the race. She took no steps to acquire territory, she showed no desire to acquire it, before 1883; if she had chosen to begin ten years earlier, as she might easily have done, without doubt she could have obtained a much larger share of African soil.

Into the administration of their new empire the Germans threw themselves with characteristic thoroughness, determined to display in the sphere of colonisation the same science and system which were winning them success in other spheres. They studied the languages, customs and ethnology of their subjects with a thoroughness unequalled by any of their rivals. They investigated the problems of tropical sanitation, and built a series of hospitals in each of their colonies which far surpassed those of other colonising powers. They laid out ports and towns, and planned roads and

railways. They established schools on a large scale, and set themselves to train the most promising of their subjects for minor posts under government. They did their best, though without much success, to attract white settlers, especially into East Africa and South-West Africa, which offered suitable homes for white men; but the stream of German emigration was drying up, and those who did emigrate still preferred the greater freedom of the United States and the British Dominions. All this cost a vast deal of money: in its first twenty years the new empire cost the German treasury some £100,000,000; and when the war came, there was only one of the German possessions—the little colony of Togoland—which was able to pay its own way. This lavish outlay was regarded as a preparation for a great future.

In two respects the German Empire was markedly and favourably distinguished from its greater French rival. The dues imposed on its trade were purely revenue duties, not protective in character; that is to say, the traders of all the world were admitted on equal terms to the new markets. As Germany was a protectionist country, this policy might not have survived; but at least it was pursued down to the war, because the German government was intelligent enough to see that a rapid growth of external trade was indispensable if the colonies were to meet the cost of their own development. Again, although native troops were enlisted, their numbers were not out of proportion to the local needs for police and

defence, and no system of compulsory service was established. When the war came, the other colonising powers were full of alarm lest a great German military power should be built up in Africa, as in Europe. The fear was a natural one ; but it is mere justice to record that it had not been realised before 1914 in any of the German colonies, and that it had been realised in the French colonies.

But in one serious way the German colonial empire compared unfavourably with its rivals, especially during the first twenty years of its history. None of the colonial empires was so continuously disturbed by war and rebellions among its primitive subjects. This may have been due in part to the rigid and unimaginative methods of German bureaucrats, to their lack of experience of colonial problems, and to their undue haste to establish orderly methods according to the stiff German standard. But it was also due to a harsh and domineering temper, and to a widespread disregard of the rights and claims of the native peoples. There was fierce fighting in East Africa, where the rebels were cruelly suppressed. In the Cameroons, whose tribes had been so ready to welcome European supremacy that they had repeatedly asked for British protection, no less than forty-six punitive expeditions were recorded between 1891 and 1907. But the blackest page in German colonial history, and one of the blackest pages in the story of European expansion, was afforded by South-West Africa. All the tribes of that wide

but thinly-peopled region were driven to revolt, and fought so long and desperately that an army of nearly 20,000 German troops had to be sent to deal with them, at a cost of £15,000,000, and with the loss of 5000 German lives. The total native population at the beginning of the troubles amounted only to some 40,000 families: it was reduced by one-half before peace was restored. The most determined of the revolting tribes, the Hereros, were hunted down like vermin. 'The Herero people must now leave the land,' said a proclamation by General von Trotha in 1904, at an early stage in the revolt. 'Within the German frontier every Herero, with or without weapons, with or without cattle, will be shot. I shall take charge of no more women and children, but shall drive them back to their people.' Though this proclamation was disavowed by the home government, it was acted upon. Ten thousand of these unhappy people, mostly old men, women and children, were driven into a waterless desert, where they nearly all perished. Apart from a few who escaped to British territory, and some who, at the end of the troubles, were settled upon reserves of inferior land within the German colony, the Herero people were wiped out of existence.

These events produced a profound effect in Europe, coloured the views of the European governments about German imperialism, and were ultimately produced as a justification for the entire suppression of the extra-European empire of Germany after the war. It is but fair

to note, however, that they had meanwhile influenced opinion in Germany. In 1906 a searching investigation into the abuses that had defiled all the German colonies was undertaken at the request of the Reichstag, and its results were published. Quite apart from the incessant wars, many evils and injustices were disclosed; and the result was a serious attempt to remove the reproach which attached to the German colonial system. Under the direction of Herr Dernburg, who became colonial secretary in 1907, great reforms were achieved; and although it would be too much to say that all the evils which had shown themselves in the first period of German colonisation had been conquered, yet it can truly be said that after 1907 the German colonies compared not unfavourably with the other European colonies in regard to the treatment of their native subjects, and very favourably indeed in some other regards, such as the scientific treatment of tropical maladies.

VII

At the opening of the twentieth century, which was everywhere celebrated as marking the dawn of a new era in human progress, the most impressive fact was that the process of partitioning the globe among a group of European world-powers was almost completed, and white civilisation had taken control of the destinies of humanity. Very rapid progress was being made in the equipment of all the backward regions with the material apparatus

of civilisation. The knowledge of the west was being made available for their service. The diseases of the tropics were being studied: their conquest was in sight. Schools and churches, law-courts and markets, were arising in the most remote lands. Steamboats, roads and railways, and the interchange of raw materials for the finished products of the western factories, were knitting all the peoples together. The process of unifying the world was going on apace.

But all this fair seeming was clouded by a great menace. The newly formed world-empires, which had been able to resolve their differences during the period of partition because there seemed to be an ample field for all their ambitions, had reached the end of that stage. They watched one another jealously in every quarter of the globe. They were aware that their rivalry might blaze into a universal war on the occasion of any dispute, however small. They were all feverishly heaping up armaments in anticipation of this event. They had just failed, at the Hague Conference of 1899, to come to any agreement in regard to the cessation of this dangerous and ruinous competition. And the danger was vastly multiplied because the chief world-powers were already sharply divided in Europe into two closely knit alliances, which seemed to be waiting for war: the Triple Alliance of Germany, Austria, and Italy on the one hand, which was the older and the stronger of these groups, so far as Europe was concerned; the more recent Dual Alliance of France and Russia

on the other—formed, as an answer to the Triple Alliance, during the last decade of the nineteenth century. From these rival groups two of the world-powers—Britain and the United States—as yet stood aloof ; Japan scarcely yet counted in the first rank. But even so, if the two European groups came to war, it was almost inevitable that their conflict should extend over the world. They were constantly tempted to war : there were many grounds of friction between them in Europe itself ; and the strain of the intensifying preparation was itself a danger, since each group was tempted to seize a moment when it seemed to have an advantage in order to end the intolerable burden.

But there was one feature of the situation which counted for as much as all the rest in this generation of striving after world-power. The Triple Alliance, dominated by Germany, was manifestly the stronger in Europe, and in the event of war its central position was certain to give it a great advantage. But its resources outside Europe were relatively insignificant. Its members had obtained only negligible shares in the partition of the world—Austria nothing at all, Italy only some strips of torrid desert, even Germany an empire which could not compare with those of the other world-powers. Russia and France, on the other hand, were the second and third in magnitude of the world-powers, ranking only after the British Empire. If they were given time to organise their vast resources for a world-conflict (and France

was eagerly drilling her black subjects, while the numbers that Russia could bring into the field were limited only by munitions and transport) the Dual Alliance must ultimately overwhelm its more powerful rival, unless in the meanwhile there was some change in the balance of power. A war in Europe would ensure such a change; for the extra-European empires, certainly of France and perhaps even of Russia, must follow the fortunes of the parent-states. It must be obvious that these circumstances offered a very great temptation to Germany, especially as her whole national tradition taught her that problems of power can best be resolved by a bold use of the sword. If ever there was a set of circumstances in which all the principles of Frederick the Great and Bismarck would seem to dictate a ruthless policy of war, it was the set of circumstances that presented itself when the partition of the world had been completed without giving to Germany a share commensurate with her power, and when the Franco-Russian alliance had arrayed against her two powers, both her inferiors by every test of strength, which possessed huge extra-European dominions such as Germany desired. When we remember the history and traditions of nineteenth-century Germany, and the fact that every stage in her marvellous progress had been made possible by the unflinching use of force, it is not surprising that there should have been among her people a strong and growing body of opinion which looked forward to another great war as the inevitable next step in her advance,

and was willing to force the issue if need be. It is not surprising that during the years from 1900 to 1914 Germany should have become the chief source of the world's fear of a coming cataclysm. What is surprising is rather that the cataclysm was so long delayed. It was perhaps delayed by a variety of concurrent causes. For one thing, Germany had no such cool-headed, masterful, unscrupulous and far-seeing leader as Frederick the Great or Bismarck had been in earlier stages of her progress: she had fallen under the rule of a vain, shallow, clever poseur, who loved posturing under the limelight, but could never decide whether he fancied himself most in the rôle of the War-Lord in Shining Armour, or in that of the Angel of Peace; and there was no secondary figure capable of fixing his irresolution to either of these attitudes. For another thing, Germany was enjoying an immense and expanding prosperity; and her mercantile interests shuddered at the thought of the unpredictable risks of war. For a third thing, the course of events during the first years of the new century (which will occupy our attention later) were such as to make the risks of war seem vastly greater, and to change profoundly the conditions of the coming conflict. In bringing about this change, Britain played the greatest part. She also, as we shall see in the next chapter, had reached a turning-point in her history when the South African War brought to an end her period of flamboyant imperialism, and made her tremble at the thought of the vast responsibilities she had

assumed, and the risks of the 'splendid isolation' she had hitherto pursued.

For the best part of a generation after 1870 Germany had been, on the whole, a force making for peace in Europe, because she was, in Bismarck's phrase, 'a satiated power,' having achieved the ambition of national unity, and being recognised as the strongest of the European nation-states. From 1890 onwards she was a force making for unrest and ultimately for war, because she was no longer a 'satiated power.' A new ambition, more grandiose than that of national unity, had taken hold of her mind and of the mind of Europe—the ambition of world-power; and here she was far indeed from being satiated, because her share was immeasurably less than her greatness seemed to demand. Filled with pride in her own achievements, believing herself to be, beyond rivalry, the greatest nation in the world—greatest in the arts of peace and greatest in the arts of war—Germany could not bring herself to accept the very subordinate place which Fortune had assigned to her in the imperial sphere. She had entered late into the field, through no fault of her own, but because of the cruel disunity from which she had suffered during the six centuries that ended in 1870. She had found all the most desirable regions of the earth already occupied. Now that 'world-power' had become the test of greatness among states, she could be content with nothing short of the first rank among world-states. If this rank could not be achieved, she seemed to

be sentenced to the same sort of fate as had befallen Holland or Denmark: she might be ever so prosperous, as these little states were, but she would be dwarfed by the giant powers which would surround her, and her voice would count for little in the councils of the world. But if a world-power worthy of Germany's standing and traditions were to come into being, it could not be created, as the Russian, the British, and the American world-powers had been created—by a slow and almost natural growth. This possibility was excluded by the fact that the whole world had been partitioned. Greatness in the non-European world could now only be achieved at the expense of those who already possessed it. Was it unnatural that a generation who had seen how European hegemony had been swiftly achieved by a strong will, efficient organisation, and military might should be readily persuaded that the same methods must once more be applied?

It would be a misreading of history to suggest that this grandiose and terrible aim was deliberately adopted and worked for by the German government or the controlling factors in the German nation, or that the Great War of 1914 was consciously and calmly prepared during the preceding decades. But the achievement of a worthy position for Germany according to the new standards of world-power was a natural ambition. It could apparently only be satisfied by war. A strong, self-confident, and industrious people, whose

national pride had been raised almost to a pitch of megalomania by the unbroken triumphs of half a century, was very easily brought to a temper in which it could contemplate the nightmare of a world-war not merely with equanimity but with hope and exultation. And the existence of this temper in Germany was the most formidable and menacing of the many formidable and menacing features of world-politics in the early years of the new century.

Even before that century opened, during the decade from 1890 to 1900, the German people and their government were eagerly questing in all directions for the means of further expansion; and these ambitions helped to create the world-wide uneasiness with which the new century began. It is necessary to dwell for a little upon the plans and projects of these years, vague as they often were, because without some understanding of them, the strain of war-politics during the following years must be unintelligible. It would be an error to suppose that all these schemes were systematically and continuously pursued with the whole strength of the German state. They appealed to different bodies of opinion. Some of them were eagerly taken up for a time, and then allowed to fall into the background, though seldom wholly dropped. But taken as a whole they showed the existence of a restless ambition without very clearly defined aims, and an eagerness to make use of every opening for the extension of power, which constituted a very dangerous

frame of mind in a nation so strong, industrious, and persistent as the German nation.

In spite of the disappointing results of colonisation in Africa, the German colonial enthusiasts hoped that something suitably grandiose might yet be erected there: if the Belgian Congo could somehow be acquired, and if the Portuguese would agree to sell their large territories on the east and west coasts, a great empire of Tropical Africa might be brought into being. This vision was never abandoned: it was the theme of many pamphlets published during the course of the war.

In the 'nineties there seemed also to be hope in South Africa, where use might be made of the strained relations between Britain and the Boer Republics. German South-West Africa formed a convenient base for operations in this region: it was equipped with a costly system of strategic railways, far more elaborate than the commerce of the colony required. There is no doubt that President Kruger was given reason to anticipate that he would receive German help: in 1895 (before the Jameson Raid) Kruger publicly proclaimed that the time had come 'to form ties of the closest friendship between Germany and the Transvaal, ties such as are natural between fathers and children'; in 1896 (after the Jameson Raid) came the Emperor's telegram congratulating President Kruger upon having repelled the invaders 'without recourse to the aid of friendly powers'; in 1897 a formal treaty of friendship and commerce was made between Germany and

the Orange Free State, with which the Transvaal had just concluded a treaty of perpetual alliance. Meanwhile German munitions of war were pouring into the Transvaal through Delagoa Bay. But when the crisis came, Germany did nothing. She could not, because the British fleet stood in the way.

South America, again, offered a promising field. There were many thousands of German settlers, especially in southern Brazil: the Pan-German League assiduously laboured to organise these settlers, and to fan their patriotic zeal, by means of schools, books, and newspapers. But the Monroe Doctrine stood in the way of South American annexations. Perhaps Germany might have been ready to see how far she could go with the United States, the least military of great powers. But there was good reason to suppose that the British fleet would have to be reckoned with; and an attack upon South America with that formidable watchdog at large and unmuzzled was an uninviting prospect.

In the Far East the prospects of immediate advance seemed more favourable, since the Chinese Empire appeared to be breaking up. The seizure of Kiao-chau in 1897 was a hopeful beginning. But the Anglo-Japanese alliance of 1902 formed a serious obstacle to any vigorous forward policy in this region. Once more the British fleet loomed up as a barrier.

Yet another dream, often referred to by the pamphleteers though never brought to overt

action by the government, was the dream that the rich empire of the Dutch in the Malay Archipelago should be acquired by Germany. Holland herself, according to all the political ethnologists of the Pan-German League, ought to be part of the German Empire; and if so, her external dominions would follow the destiny of the ruling state. But this was a prospect to be talked about, not to be worked for openly.

A more immediately practicable field of operations was to be found in the Turkish Empire. It was here that the most systematic endeavours were made during this period: the Berlin-Bagdad scheme, which was to be the keystone of the arch of German world-power, had already taken shape before the new century opened. Abstractly regarded, a German dominion over the wasted and misgoverned lands of the Turkish Empire would have meant a real advance of civilisation, and would have been no more unjustifiable than the British control of Egypt or India. This feeling perhaps explained the acquiescence with which the establishment of German influence in Turkey was accepted by most of the powers.

But neither the great Berlin-Bagdad project, nor any of the other dreams and visions, had been definitely put into operation during the decade 1890-1900. Germany was as yet feeling the way, preparing the ground, and building up her resources both military and industrial. Perhaps the main result which emerged from the tentative experiments of these years was that at every point the

obstacle was the sprawling British Empire, and the too-powerful British fleet. The conviction grew that the overthrow of this fat and top-heavy colossus, or, at the least, the creation of a German navy able to deal with the British navy on equal terms, was the necessary preliminary to the creation of the German world-state.

This was a doctrine which had long been preached by the chief political mentor of modern Germany, Treitschke, who died in 1896. He was never tired of declaring that Britain was a decadent and degenerate state, that her empire was an unreal empire, and that it would collapse before the first serious attack. That it should ever have come into being was one of the paradoxes of history ; for it was manifestly not due to straightforward force, like the German Empire; and the Treitschkean philosophy could not understand a state which did not rest upon power, but upon consent, which had not been built up, like Prussia, by the deliberate action of government, but which had grown almost at haphazard, through the spontaneous activity of free and self-governing citizens. Treitschke and his disciples could only explain the paradox by assuming that since it had not been created by force, it must have been created by low cunning ; and they invented the theory that British statesmen had for centuries pursued an undeviating and Machiavellian policy of keeping the more virile states of Europe at cross-purposes with one another by means of the cunning device called the Balance of Power, while behind the

backs of these tricked and childlike nations Britain was meanly snapping up all the most desirable regions of the earth. According to this view it was in some mysterious way Britain's fault that France and Germany were not the best of friends, and that Russia had been alienated from her ancient ally. But the day of reckoning would come when these mean devices would no longer avail, and the pampered, selfish, and overgrown colossus would find herself faced by hard-trained and finely tempered Germany, clad in her shining armour. Then, at the first shock, India would revolt; and the Dutch of South Africa would welcome their German liberators; and the great colonies, to which Britain had granted a degree of independence that no virile state would ever have permitted, would shake off the last shreds of subordination; and the ramshackle British Empire would fall to pieces; and Germany would emerge triumphant, free to pursue all her great schemes, and to create a lasting world-power, based upon Force and System and upon 'a healthy egoism,' not upon 'irrational sentimentalities' about freedom and justice.

These were the doctrines and calculations of *Realpolitik*. They were becoming influential, in important German circles, during the 'nineties. Their influence surely had something to do with the significant change in the trend of German policy which took place at the end of the century, when Germany refused to consider the projects of disarmament put forward at the Hague in 1899,

when the raising of the German navy to a serious rivalry with the British navy was begun by the Navy Acts of 1898 and 1900, and when the Emperor announced that the future of Germany lay upon the water, and that hers must be the admiralty of the Atlantic.

The dreadful anticipation of coming conflict weighed upon the world. France, now recovered from the wounds of 1870, was always aware of it; and some of her leaders were not without hope that if the conflict came, they might wreak vengeance for that defeat, and regain the lost provinces. Russia, threatened by German policy in the Balkans, was more and more clearly realising it; she also had her hope that the conflict might enable her to satisfy her secular ambition by acquiring Constantinople. But Britain was slow to take alarm. As late as 1898 Mr. Joseph Chamberlain was advocating an alliance between Britain, Germany, and America to maintain the peace of the world; and Cecil Rhodes, when he devised his plan for turning Oxford into the training-ground of British youth from all the free nations of the Empire, found a place in his scheme for German as well as for American students. Britain was perhaps the only one of the Great Powers that entered upon the new century without a feeling that Armageddon was looming ahead.

VIII

THE BRITISH EMPIRE AMID THE WORLD-POWERS, 1878-1914

I

THROUGHOUT the period of rivalry for world-power which began in 1878 the British Empire had continued to grow in extent, and to undergo a steady change in its character and organisation.

In the partition of Africa, Britain, in spite of the already immense extent of her domains, obtained an astonishingly large share. The protectorates of British East Africa, Uganda, Nigeria, Nyasaland, and Somaliland gave her nearly 25,000,000 new negro subjects, and these, added to her older settlements of Sierra Leone and the Gold Coast, whose area was now extended, outnumbered the whole population of the French African empire. But besides these tropical territories she acquired control over two African regions so important that they deserve separate treatment: Egypt, on the one hand, and the various extensions of her South African territories on the other. When the partition of Africa was completed, the total share of Britain amounted to 3,500,000 square miles, with a population of over 50,000,000 souls, and it included

the best regions of the continent: the British Empire, in Africa alone, was more than three times as large as the colonial empire of Germany, which was almost limited to Africa.

It may well be asked why an empire already so large should have taken also the giant's share of the last continent available for division among the powers of Europe. No doubt this was in part due to the sentiment of imperialism, which was stronger in Britain during this period than ever before. But there were other and more powerful causes. In the first place, during the period 1815-78 British influence and trade had been established in almost every part of Africa save the central interior, and no power had such definite relations with various native tribes, many of which desired to come under the protectorate of a power with whom the protection of native rights and customs was an established principle. In the second place, Britain was the only country which already possessed in Africa colonies inhabited by enterprising European settlers, and the activity of these settlers played a considerable part in the extension of the British African dominions. And in the third place, since the continental powers had adopted the policy of fiscal protection, the annexation of a region by any of them meant that the trade of other nations might be restricted or excluded; the annexation of a territory by Britain meant that it would be open freely and on equal terms to the trade of all nations. For this reason the trading

interests in Britain, faced by the possibility of exclusion from large areas with which they had carried on traffic, were naturally anxious that as much territory as possible should be brought under British supremacy, in order that it might remain open to their trade.

It is the main justification for British annexations that they opened and developed new markets for all the world, instead of closing them; and it was this fact chiefly which made the acquisition of such vast areas tolerable to the other trading powers. The extension of the British Empire was thus actually a benefit to all the non-imperial states, especially to such active trading countries as Italy, Holland, Scandinavia, or America. If at any time Britain should reverse her traditional policy, and reserve for her own merchants the trade of the immense areas which have been brought under her control, nothing is more certain than that the world would protest, and protest with reason, against the exorbitant and disproportionate share which has fallen to her. Only so long as British control means the open door for all the world will the immense extent of these acquisitions continue to be accepted without protest by the rest of the world.

In the new protectorates of this period Britain found herself faced by a task with which she had never had to deal on so gigantic a scale, though she had a greater experience in it than any other nation: the task of governing justly whole populations of backward races, among whom

white men could not permanently dwell, and whom they visited only for the purposes of commercial exploitation. The demands of industry for the raw materials of these countries involved the employment of labour on a very large scale; but the native disliked unfamiliar toil, and as his wants were very few, could easily earn enough to keep him in the idleness he loved. Slavery was the customary mode of getting uncongenial tasks performed in Africa; but against slavery European civilisation had set its face. Again, the ancient unvarying customs whereby the rights and duties of individual tribesmen were enforced, and the primitive societies held together, were often inconsistent with Western ideas, and tended to break down altogether on contact with Western industrial methods. How were the needs of industry to be reconciled with justice to the subject peoples? How were their customs to be reconciled with the legal ideas of their new masters? How were these simple folk to be taught the habits of labour? How were the resources of their land to be developed without interference with their rights of property and with the traditional usages arising from them? These were problems of extreme difficulty, which faced the rulers of all the new European empires. The attempt to solve them in a high-handed way, and with a view solely to the interests of the ruling race, led to many evils: it produced the atrocities of the Congo; it produced in the German colonies the constant unrest and the long series of wars

which we have already discussed. In the British dominions a long tradition and a long experience saved the subject peoples from most of these evils. We dare not claim that there were no abuses in the British lands; but at least it can be claimed that government has always held it to be its duty to safeguard native rights, and to prevent the total break-up of the tribal system which could alone hold these communities together. The problem was not fully solved; perhaps it is insoluble. But at least the native populations were not driven to despair, and were generally able to feel that they were justly treated. 'Let me tell you,' a Herero is recorded to have written from British South Africa to his kinsmen under German rule, 'Let me tell you that the land of the English is a good land, since there is no ill-treatment. White and black stand on the same level. There is much work and much money, and your overseer does not beat you, or if he does he breaks the law and is punished.' There was a very striking contrast between the steady peace which on the whole reigned in all the British dominions, and the incessant warfare which formed the history of the German colonies. The tradition of protection of native rights, established during the period 1815-78, and the experience then acquired, stood the British in good stead. During the ordeal of the Great War there was no serious revolt among these recently conquered subjects; and one of the most touching features of the war was the eagerness of chiefs

and their peoples to help the protecting power, and the innumerable humble gifts which they spontaneously offered. Much remains to be done before a perfect solution is found for the problems of these dominions of yesterday. But it may justly be claimed that trusteeship, not domination, has been the spirit in which they have been administered; and that this is recognised by their subjects, despite all the mistakes and defects to which all human governments must be liable in dealing with a problem so complex.

Administrative problems of a yet more complex kind were raised in the two greatest acquisitions of territory made by Britain during these years, in Egypt and the Soudan, and in South Africa. The events connected with these two regions have aroused greater controversy than those connected with any other British dominions; the results of these events have been more striking, and in different ways more instructive as to the spirit and methods of British imperialism, than those displayed in almost any other field; and for these reasons we shall not hesitate to dwell upon them at some length.

II

The establishment of British control over Egypt was due to the most curious chain of unforeseen and unexpected events which even the records of the British Empire contain Nominally a part of the Turkish Empire, Egypt had been in fact a practically independent state,

paying only a small fixed tribute to the Sultan, ever since the remarkable Albanian adventurer, Mehemet Ali, had established himself as its Pasha in the confusion following the French occupation (1806). Mehemet Ali had been an extraordinarily enterprising prince. He had created a formidable army, had conquered the great desert province of the Soudan and founded its capital, Khartoum, and had nearly succeeded in overthrowing the Turkish Empire and establishing his own power in its stead: during the period 1825-40 he had played a leading rôle in European politics. Though quite illiterate, he had posed as the introducer of Western civilisation into Egypt; but his grandiose and expensive policy had imposed terrible burdens upon the *fellahin* (peasantry), and the heavy taxation which was necessary to maintain his armies and the spurious civilisation of his capital was only raised by cruel oppressions.

The tradition of lavish expenditure, met by grinding the peasantry, was accentuated by Mehemet's successors. It inevitably impoverished the country. Large loans were raised in the West, to meet increasing deficits; and the European creditors in course of time found it necessary to insist that specific revenues should be ear-marked as a security for their interest, and to claim powers of supervision over finance. The construction of the Suez Canal (opened 1869), which was due to the enterprise of the French, promised to bring increased prosperity to Egypt;

but in the meanwhile it involved an immense outlay. At the beginning of our period Egypt was already on the verge of bankruptcy, and the Khedive was compelled to sell his holding of Suez Canal shares, which were shrewdly acquired for Britain by Disraeli.

But financial chaos was not the only evil from which Egypt suffered. There was administrative chaos also, and this was not diminished by the special jurisdictions which had been allowed to the various groups of Europeans settled in the country. The army, unpaid and undisciplined, was ready to revolt; and above all, the helpless mass of the peasantry were reduced to the last degree of penury, and exposed to the merciless and arbitrary severity of the officials, who fleeced them of their property under the lash. All the trading nations were affected by this state of anarchy in an important centre of trade; all the creditors of the Egyptian debt observed it with alarm. But the two powers most concerned were France and Britain, which between them held most of the debt, and conducted most of the foreign trade, of Egypt; while to Britain Egypt had become supremely important, since it now controlled the main avenue of approach to India.

When a successful military revolt, led by Arabi Pasha, threatened to complete the disorganisation of the country (1882), France and Britain decided that they ought to intervene to restore order, the other powers all agreeing. But at the

last moment France withdrew, and the task was undertaken by Britain single-handed.[1] In a short campaign Arabi was overthrown ; and now Britain had to address herself to the task of reconstructing the political and economic organisation of Egypt. It was her hope and intention that the work should be done as rapidly as possible, in order that she might be able to withdraw from a difficult and thankless task, which brought her into very delicate relations with the other powers interested in Egypt. But withdrawal was not easy. The task of reorganisation proved to be a much larger and more complicated one than had been anticipated ; and it was greatly increased when the strange wave of religious fanaticism aroused by the preaching of the Mahdi swept over the Soudan, raised a great upheaval, and led to the destruction of the Egyptian armies of occupation. Britain had now to decide whether the revolting province should be reconquered or abandoned. Reconquest could not be effected by the utterly disorganised Egyptian army ; if it was to be attempted, it must be by means of British troops. But this would not only mean a profitless expenditure, it would also indefinitely prolong the British occupation, which Britain was desirous of bringing to an end at the earliest possible moment.

The romantic hero, Gordon, was therefore sent to Khartoum to carry out the withdrawal from the Soudan of all the remaining Egyptian garri-

[1] See above, p. 164.

sons. On his arrival he came to the conclusion that the position was not untenable, and took no steps to evacuate. There was much dangerous delay and vacillation; and in the end Gordon was besieged in Khartoum, and killed by the bands of the Mahdi, before a relief force could reach him. But this triumph of Mahdism increased its menace to Egypt. The country could not be left to its own resources until this peril had been removed, or until the Egyptian army had been fully reorganised. So the occupation prolonged itself, year after year.

The situation was, in fact, utterly anomalous. Egypt was a province of Turkey, ruled by a semi-independent Khedive. Britain's chief agent in the country was in form only in the position of a diplomatic representative. But the very existence of the country depended upon the British army of occupation, and upon the work of the British officers who were reconstructing the Egyptian army. And its hope of future stability depended upon the work of the British administrators, financiers, jurists, and engineers who were labouring to set its affairs in order. These officials, with Sir Evelyn Baring (Lord Cromer) at their head, had an extraordinarily difficult task to perform. Their relations with the native government, which they constantly had to overrule, were difficult enough. But besides this, they had to deal with the agents of the other European powers, who, as representing the European creditors of the Egyptian debt, had

the right to interfere in practically all financial questions, and could make any logical financial reorganisation, and any free use of the country's financial resources for the restoration of its prosperity, all but impossible.

Yet in the space of a very few years an amazing work of restoration and reorganisation was achieved. Financial stability was re-established, while at the same time taxation was reduced. The forced labour which had been exacted from the peasantry was abolished; they were no longer robbed of their property under the lash; they obtained a secure tenure in their land; and they found that its productive power was increased, by means of great schemes of irrigation. An impartial system of justice was organised—for the first time in all the long history of Egypt since the fall of the Roman Empire. The army was remodelled by British officers. Schools of lower and higher grade were established in large numbers. In short, Egypt began to assume the aspect of a prosperous and well-organised modern community. And all this was the work, in the main, of some fifteen years.

Meanwhile in the Soudan triumphant barbarism had produced an appalling state of things. It is impossible to exaggerate the hideousness of the régime of Mahdism. A ferocious tyranny terrorised and reduced to desolation the whole of the upper basin of the Nile; and the population is said to have shrunk from 12,000,000 to 2,000,000, although exact figures are of course unattainable.

One of the evil consequences of this régime was that it prevented a scientific treatment of the flow of the Nile, on which the very life of Egypt depended. Scientific irrigation had already worked wonders in increasing the productivity of Egypt, but to complete this work, and to secure avoidance of the famines which follow any deficiency in the Nile-flow, it was necessary to deal with the upper waters of the great river. On this ground, and in order to remove the danger of a return of barbarism, which was threatened by frequent Mahdist attacks, and finally in order to rescue captives who were enduring terrible sufferings in the hands of the Mahdi, it appeared that the reconquest of the Soudan must be undertaken as the inevitable sequel to the reorganisation of Egypt. It was achieved, with a wonderful efficiency which made the name of Kitchener famous, in the campaigns of 1896-98. The reconquered province was nominally placed under the joint administration of Britain and Egypt; but in fact the very remarkable work of civilisation which was carried out in it during the years preceding the Great War was wholly directed by British agents and officers.

The occupation of the Soudan necessitated a prolongation of the British occupation of Egypt. But, indeed, such a prolongation was in any case inevitable; for the beneficial reforms in justice, administration, finance, and the organisation of the country's resources, which had been effected in half a generation, required to be carefully

watched and nursed until they should be securely rooted: to a certainty they would have collapsed if the guardianship of Britain had been suddenly and completely withdrawn. The growing prosperity of Egypt, however, and still more the diffusion of Western education among its people, naturally brought into existence a nationalist party, who resented what they felt to be a foreign dominance in their country, and aspired after the institutions of Western self-government. The classes among whom this movement first sprang up were not the classes who form the bulk of the population of Egypt—the *fellahin*, who from the time of the Pharaohs downwards have been exploited and oppressed by every successive conqueror who has imposed his rule on the country. This class, which profited more than any other from the British régime, which, under that régime, knew for the first time justice, freedom from tyranny, and the opportunity of enjoying a fair share of the fruits of its own labour, was as yet unvocal. Accustomed through centuries to submission, accepting good or bad seasons, just or unjust masters, as the gods may send them, the *fellah* had not yet begun to have thoughts or opinions about his place in society and his right to a share in the control of his own destinies; nor was it possible that he should do so until he had been nurtured by just treatment into self-respect and self-reliance. The classes among whom the nationalist movement found its strength were the classes which had been in the past

accustomed to enjoy some degree of domination: the relics of the conquering races, Arabs or Turks, who have succeeded one another in the rule of Egypt, the small traders and shopkeepers of the towns, drawn from many different races, the students who were influenced by the knowledge and the political ideas of the West. In the early years of the twentieth century a dangerous ferment was going on among these classes. It even took the form, as such movements are apt to do, of secret conspiracy and assassination. It gravely increased the difficulties of the delicate and anomalous position in which the British representatives in Egypt stood. If the foreign friction which had been among the worst of these difficulties had not been largely removed by an agreement with France in 1904, the position might have become impossible. It was becoming evident, even before the war, that a fresh solution must be found for the Egyptian problem. The war, as we shall see, made drastic and sudden changes inevitable.

III

The most vexed, difficult, and critical problems in the history of the British Empire since 1878—perhaps the most difficult in the whole course of its history—have been those connected with the South African colonies. In 1878 there were four distinct European provinces in South Africa, besides protected native areas, like Basutoland. All four had sprung from the original Anglo-

Dutch colony of the Cape of Good Hope. In two of them—Cape Colony and Natal—the two European peoples, British and Dutch, dwelt side by side, the Dutch being in a majority in the former, the British in the latter; but in both the difficulty of their relationship was complicated by the presence of large coloured populations, which included not only the native African peoples, Hottentots, Kaffirs, Zulus, and so forth, but also a large number of Asiatics, Malays who had been brought in by the Dutch before the British conquest, and Indians who had begun to come in more recently in large numbers, especially to Natal. Difference of attitude towards these peoples between the British authorities and the Dutch settlers had been in the past, as we have seen, a main cause of friction between the two European peoples, and had caused the long postponement of full self-government. In the other two provinces, the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, the white inhabitants were, in 1878, almost exclusively Dutch. The native populations in these states were no longer in a state of formal slavery, but they were treated as definitely subject and inferior peoples: a law of the Transvaal laid it down that 'there shall be no equality in Church or State between white and black.' Thus the mutual distrust originally aroused by the native question still survived. It was intensified by ill-feeling between the Boers and British missionaries. When Livingstone, the British missionary hero, reported the difficulties

which the Boers had put in his way, British opinion was made more hostile than ever. Of the two Boer republics, the Orange Free State had enjoyed complete independence since 1854; and no serious friction ever arose between it and the British government. But the Transvaal, which had been turbulent and restless from the first, had been annexed in 1878, largely because it seemed to be drifting into a war of extermination with the Zulus. As a consequence, Britain was drawn into a badly managed Zulu War; and when this dangerous tribe had been conquered, the Transvaal revolted. The Boers defeated a small British force at Majuba; whereupon, instead of pursuing the struggle, the British government resolved to try the effect of magnanimity, and conceded (1881 and 1884) full local independence to the Transvaal, subject only to a vague recognition of British suzerainty.

But this concession failed to bring concord. The Transvaal Boers, knowing little of the world, thought they had defeated Britain; and under the lead of Paul Kruger, a shrewd old farmer who henceforth directed their policy with all but autocratic power, began to pursue the aim of creating a purely Dutch South Africa, and of driving the British into the sea. Kruger's policy was one of pure racial dominance, not of equality of rights. It was a natural aim, under all the conditions. But it was the source of grave evils. Inevitably it stimulated a parallel movement in Cape Colony, where Dutch and British were

learning to live peaceably together. The Boer extremists also began to look about for allies, and were tempted to hope for aid from Germany, who had just established herself in South-West Africa. Full of pride, the Transvaalers, though they already held a great and rich country which was very thinly peopled, began to push outwards, and especially to threaten the native tribes in the barren region of Bechuanaland, which lay between the Transvaal and the German territory. To this Britain replied by establishing a protectorate over Bechuanaland (1884) at the request of native chiefs : the motive of this annexation was not suspicion of Germany, for this suspicion did not yet exist, but the desire to protect the native population.

Kruger's vague project of a Dutch South Africa would probably have caused little anxiety so long as his resources were limited to the strength of the thinly scattered Boer farmers. But the situation was fundamentally altered by the discovery of immense deposits first of diamonds and then of gold in South Africa, and most richly of all in the Rand district of the Transvaal. These discoveries brought a rapid inrush of European miners, financiers, and their miscellaneous camp-followers, and in a few years a very rich and populous European community had established itself in the Transvaal, and had created as its centre the mushroom new city of Johannesburg (founded 1884). These immigrants, who came from many countries, but especially from Britain,

changed the situation in the Transvaal; it seemed as though the majority among the white men in that state would soon be British.

A simple and primitive organisation of government, such as sufficed for the needs of Boer farmers, was manifestly inadequate for the needs of the new population, which included, in the nature of things, many undesirable elements; and it was natural that the mining population should desire to be brought under a more modern type of government, or to obtain an effective share in the control of their own affairs. But this was precisely what the Boers of Kruger's way of thinking were determined to refuse them. They were resolved that Boer ascendancy in the Transvaal should not be weakened. They therefore denied to the new immigrants all the rights of citizenship, and would not even permit them to manage the local affairs of Johannesburg. At the same time Kruger imposed heavy taxation upon the gold industry and the people who conducted it; and out of the proceeds he was able not only to pay the expenses of government without burdening the Boer farmers, but to build up the military power by means of which he hoped ultimately to carry out his great project. Thus the 'Uitlanders' found themselves treated as an inferior race in the land which their industry was enriching. They practically paid the cost of the government, but had no share in directing it.

The policy of racial ascendancy has seldom

been pursued in a more mischievous or dangerous form. One cannot but feel a certain sympathy with the Boers' desire to maintain Boer ascendancy in the land which they had conquered. Yet it must be remembered that they were themselves very recent immigrants: the whole settlement of the Transvaal had taken place in Paul Kruger's lifetime.

The diamonds and the gold of the recent discoveries had produced in South Africa a new element of power: the power of great wealth, wielded by a small number of men. Some of these were, of course, mean and sordid souls, to whom wealth was an end in itself. But among them one emerged who was more than a millionaire, who was capable of dreaming great dreams, and had acquired his wealth chiefly in order that he might have the power to realise them. This was Cecil Rhodes, a strange combination of the financier and the idealist. If he was sometimes tempted to resort to the questionable devices that high finance seems to cultivate, and if his ideals took on sometimes a rather vulgar colour, reflected from his money-bags, nevertheless ideals were the governing factors in his life.

He dreamed of a great united state of South Africa; it was to be a British South Africa; but it was to be British, not in the sense in which Kruger wished it to be Dutch, but in the sense that equality of treatment between the white races should exist within it, as in all the British lands. He dreamed also of a great brotherhood of British

communities, or communities governed by British ideals, girdling the world, perhaps dominating it (for Rhodes was inclined to be a chauvinist), and leading it to peace and liberty. As a lad fresh from Oxford, in long journeyings over the African veldt, he had in a curious, child-like way thought out a theology, a system of politics, and a mode of life for himself; having reached the conclusion that the British race had on the whole more capacity for leading the world successfully than any other, he had resolved that it should be his life's business to forward and increase the influence of British ideas and of British modes of life; and he had systematically built up a colossal fortune in order that he might have the means to do this work. At the roots of this strange medley of poetry and chauvinism which filled his mind was an unchanging and deep veneration for the out-standing memory of his youth, Oxford, which in his mind stood for all the august venerable past of England, and was the expression of her moral essence. When he died, after a life of money-making and intrigue, in a remote and half-developed colony, it was found that most of his immense fortune had been left either to enrich the college where he had spent a short time as a lad, or to bring picked youths from all the British lands, and from what he regarded as the two great sister communities of America and Germany, so that they might drink in the spirit of England, at Oxford, its sanctuary.

His immediate task lay in South Africa, where, from the moment of his entry upon public life, he became the leader of the British cause as Kruger was the leader of the Dutch: millionaire-dreamer and shrewd, obstinate farmer, they form a strange contrast. The one stood for South African unity based upon equality of the white races: the other also for unity, but for unity based upon the ascendancy of one of the white races. In the politics of Cape Colony Rhodes achieved a remarkable success: he made friends with the Dutch party and its leader Hofmeyr, who for a long time gave steady support to his schemes and maintained him in the premier-ship. It was a good beginning for the policy of racial co-operation. Rhodes's most remarkable achievement was the acquisition of the fertile upland regions of Mashonaland and Matabililand, now called Rhodesia in his honour. There were episodes which smelt of the shady practices of high finance in the events which led up to this acquisition. But in the result its settlement was well organised, after some initial difficulties, by the Chartered Company which Rhodes formed for the purpose. Now one important result of the acquisition of Rhodesia was that it hemmed in the Transvaal on the north; and, joined with the earlier annexation of Bechuanaland, isolated and insulated the two Dutch republics, which were now surrounded, everywhere except on the east, by British territory. From Cape Town up through Bechuanaland and through the new

territories Rhodes drove a long railway line. It was a business enterprise, but for him it was also a great imaginative conception, a link of empire, and he dreamed of the day when it should be continued to join the line which was being pushed up the Nile from Cairo through the hot sands of the Soudan.

Rhodes's final and most unhappy venture was an attempt to force, by violent means, a solution of the Transvaal problem. He hoped that the Uitlanders might be able, by a revolution, to overthrow Kruger's government, and, perhaps in conjunction with the more moderate Boers, to set up a system of equal treatment which would make co-operation with the other British colonies easy, and possibly bring about a federation of the whole group of South African States. He was too impatient to let the situation mature quietly. He forced the issue by encouraging the foolish Jameson Raid of 1895. This, like all wilful resorts to violence, only made things worse. It alienated and angered the more moderate Boers in the Transvaal, who were not without sympathy with the Uitlanders. It aroused the indignation of the Cape Colony Boers, and embittered racial feeling there. It put the British cause in the wrong in the eyes of the whole world, and made the Boers appear as a gallant little people struggling in the folds of a merciless python-empire. It increased immensely the difficulty of the British government in negotiating with the Transvaal for better treatment of the Uitlanders.

It stiffened the backs of Kruger and his party. The German Kaiser telegraphed his congratulations on the defeat of the Raid 'without the aid of friendly powers,' and the implication that this aid would be forthcoming in case of necessity led the Boers to believe that they could count on German help in a struggle with Britain. So every concession to the Uitlanders was obstinately refused; and after three years more of fruitless negotiation, during which German munitions were pouring into the Transvaal, the South African War began. It may be that the war could have been avoided by the exercise of patience. It may be that the imperialist spirit, which was very strong in Britain at that period, led to the adoption of a needlessly high-handed tone. But it was neither greed nor tyranny on Britain's part which brought about the conflict, but simply the demand for equal rights.

The war was one in which all the appearances were against Britain, and the whole world condemned British greed and aggression. It was a case of Goliath fighting David, the biggest empire in the world attacking two tiny republics; yet the weaker side is not necessarily always in the right. It seemed to be a conflict for the possession of gold-mines; yet Britain has never made, and never hoped to make, a penny of profit out of these mines, which remained after the war in the same hands as before it. It was a case of the interests of financiers and gold-hunters against those of simple and honest farmers; yet even

financiers have rights, and even farmers can be unjust. In reality the issue was a quite simple and straightforward one. It was the issue of racial ascendancy against racial equality, and as her traditions bade her, Britain strove for racial equality. It was the issue of self-government for the whole community as against the entrenched dominion of one section; and there was no question on which side the history of Britain must lead her to range herself. Whatever the rest of the world might say, the great self-governing colonies, which were free to help or not as they thought fit, had no doubts at all. They all sent contingents to take part in the war, because they knew it to be a war for principles fundamental to themselves.

The war dragged its weary course, and the Boers fought with such heroism, and often with such chivalry, as to win the cordial respect and admiration of their enemies. It is always a pity when men fight; but sometimes a fight lets bad blood escape, and makes friendship easier between foes who have learnt mutual respect. Four years after the peace which added the Transvaal and the Orange Free State as conquered dominions to the British Empire, the British government established in both of these provinces the full institutions of responsible self-government. As in Canada sixty years earlier, the two races were bidden to work together and make the best of one another; because now their destinies were freely under their own control. Yet this was

even a bolder experiment than that of Canada, and showed a more venturesome confidence in the healing power of self-government. How has it turned out ? Within five years more, the four divided provinces which had presented such vexed problems in 1878 were combined in the federal Union of South Africa, governed by institutions which reproduced those of Britain and her colonies.

In handing over to the now united states of South Africa the unqualified control of their own affairs, Britain necessarily left to them the vexed problem of devising a just relation between the ruling races and their subjects of backward or alien stocks ; the problem which had been the source of most of the difficulties of South Africa for a century past, and which had long delayed the concession of full self-government. Nowhere in the world does this problem assume a more acute form than in South Africa, where there is not only a majority of negroes, mostly of the vigorous Bantu stock, but also a large number of immigrants, mainly from India, who as subjects of the British crown naturally claim special rights. South Africa has to find her own solution for this complex problem ; and she has not yet found it. But in two ways her association with the British Empire has helped and will help her. If the earlier policy of the British government, guided by the missionaries, laid too exclusive an emphasis upon native rights, and hampered the development of the colony by the way in which it interpreted these rights, at least it had established a tradition hostile to the

policy of mere ruthless exploitation. An absolute parity of treatment between white and black must be not only impracticable, but harmful to both sides. But between the two extremes of a visionary equality and a white ascendancy ruthlessly employed for exploitation, a third term is possible—the just tutelage of the white man over the black, with a reasonable freedom for native custom.

Towards this solution South Africa has been feeling her way. 'A practice has grown up in South Africa,' says a distinguished South African statesman,[1] 'of creating parallel institutions, giving the natives their own separate institutions on parallel lines with institutions for whites. It may be that on these lines we may yet be able to solve a problem which may otherwise be insoluble.' This attempt at a solution has assumed several different forms. In the three native protectorates of Basutoland, Bechuanaland, and Swaziland the natives enjoy almost complete autonomy under their own chieftains, subject only to the supervision of a Resident who is responsible not to the Union government but to the High Commissioner as representative of the Crown; and the peoples of these provinces attach high value to their special position, and dislike the idea of being brought under the control of the Union government. They still adhere to their tribal usages and their communal system of land-tenure; for this reason their land is unproductive, and the pressure of population upon the means of subsist-

[1] General Smuts, May 22, 1917.

ence is severe. In the Transkeian territories, a great native reserve subject to the government of Cape Colony, the tribal system also survives, but there is a rudimentary representative body through which a colonial commissioner keeps in contact with his native subjects; the authority of the chiefs is gradually breaking down; and an attempt is being made slowly to substitute individual for communal ownership of land. In Zululand native reserves have been maintained alongside of areas set apart for white settlement. In all these cases the men of the tribes go out to work for the white man's wages; but they return eagerly for half of every year, and resume their native costume and modes of life. Experience seems to show that in this way they are largely saved from the demoralisation which is apt to result from a sudden breach with traditional usages and the ethical system which they embody. The natives who thus keep roots in their own soil seem to be both happier and better than those who have been submerged (as in other parts of the Union) by white civilisation, and have sunk to be mere hewers of wood for the white man. This experience has produced a belief that the true method of dealing with the native problem is by some form of segregation. But it is easier to talk about 'segregation' in general terms than to discover a just and practicable method of carrying it out, especially as it is too often advocated as a means of getting rid of the competition between black and white labour. The problem, in short, has not yet been

solved; the true relationship between the ruling white minority and the growing black majority has still to be discovered.

Nor can it be pretended that South Africa has yet established a workable relationship between the whites and the Indian immigrants, many of whom have now been in the country for two generations, and think of it as their permanent home. The restrictions which have been imposed upon 'Asiatics' have aroused acute resentment in India, and added gravely to the already great difficulties of the government of India. Here is another problem which it will not be easy to solve. But at least the fact that the South African Union and the Indian Empire are both partners in the same British commonwealth improves the chances of a just solution. It helped to find at least a temporary adjustment in 1914; in the future also it may contribute, in this as in many other ways, to ensure that a fair consideration is given to both sides of the thorny question of inter-racial relationship.

The events which led up to, and still more the events which followed, the South African War had thus brought a solution for the South African problem, which had been a continuous vexation since the moment of the British conquest. It was solved by the British panacea of self-government and equal rights. Who could have anticipated, twenty years or fifty years ago, the part which was played by South Africa in the Great War? Is there any parallel to these events,

which showed the gallant general of the Boer forces playing the part of prime minister in a united South Africa, crushing with Boer forces a revolt stirred up among the more ignorant Boers by German intrigue, and then leading an army, half Boer and half British, to the conquest of German South-West Africa ?

The South African War had proved to be the severest test which the modern British Empire had yet had to undergo. But it had emerged, not broken, as in 1782, but rejuvenated, purged of the baser elements which had alloyed its imperial spirit, and confirmed in its faith in the principles on which it was built. More than that, on the first occasion on which the essential principles or the power of the Empire had been challenged in war, all the self-governing colonies had voluntarily borne their share. Apart from a small contingent sent from Australia to the Soudan in 1885, British colonies had never before—indeed, no European colony had ever before—sent men oversea to fight in a common cause : and this not because their immediate interests were threatened, but for the sake of an idea. For that reason the South African War marks an epoch not merely in the history of the British Empire, but of European imperialism as a whole.

IV

The unity of sentiment and aim which was thus expressed had, however, been steadily growing throughout the period of European rivalry ; and

doubtless in the colonies, as in Britain, the new value attached to the imperial tie was due in a large degree to the very fact of the eagerness of the other European powers for extra-European possessions. Imperialist sentiment began to become a factor in British politics just about the beginning of this period: in 1878 the Imperial Federation Society was founded, and about the same time Disraeli, who had once spoken of the colonies as 'millstones around our necks,' was making himself the mouthpiece of the new imperialist spirit. To this wave of feeling a very notable contribution was made by Sir John Seeley's brilliant book, *The Expansion of England.* Slight as it was, and containing no facts not already familiar, it gave a new perspective to the events of the last four centuries of British history, and made the growth of the Empire seem something not merely casual and incidental, but a vital and most significant part of the British achievement. Its defect was, perhaps, that it concentrated attention too exclusively upon the external aspects of the wonderful story, and dwelt too little upon its inner spirit, upon the force and influence of the instinct of self-government which has been the most potent factor in British history. The powerful impression which it created was deepened by other books, like Froude's *Oceana* and Sir Charles Dilke's *Greater Britain*, the title of which alone was a proclamation and a prophecy. It was strengthened also by the wonderful imperial pageants, like nothing else ever witnessed in the world, which

began with the two Jubilee celebrations of 1887 and 1897, and were continued in the funerals of Queen Victoria and Edward VII., the coronations of Edward VII. and George V., and the superb Durbars of Delhi. The imaginative appeal of such solemn representations of a world-scattered fellowship of peoples and nations and tongues must not be underestimated.

More important than the pageants were the conferences of imperial statesmen which arose out of them. The prime ministers of the great colonies began to deliberate in common with the statesmen of Britain; and the discussions, though at first quite informal and devoid of authority, became more intimate and vital as time passed. The most important of these conferences were those which took place in 1907 and the following years. They were specially summoned: they were not a mere by-product of imperial ceremonial. And at these meetings the statesmen of the Empire were admitted to full knowledge of the dangerous European situation, pregnant with possibilities of war: they were taken into consultation so fully that when the crisis came they knew where they stood. Moreover, they took part in vitally important discussions upon the problems of imperial defence and the correlation of the resources of the Empire. The remarkable unanimity of the whole Empire when the test of war came, and the ease with which the forces raised in all the Dominions were co-ordinated under the same military system,

were in no small degree due to these consultations, which marked a very significant stage in the development of the Empire.

It was natural that in this age of rapid expansion and growing unity, imperial questions should be treated with a new seriousness in the British parliament, and that the offices which deal with them should cease to be, as they once were, reserved for statesmen of the second rank. The new attitude was pointedly expressed when in 1895 Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, the most brilliant politician of his generation, who could have had almost any office he desired, deliberately chose the Colonial Office. His tenure of that office was not, perhaps, memorable for any far-reaching change in colonial policy, though he introduced some useful improvements in the administration of the tropical colonies; but it was assuredly memorable for the increased intensity of interest which he succeeded in arousing in imperial questions, both at home and in the colonies. The campaign which he initiated, after the South African War, for the institution of an Imperial Zollverein or a system of Colonial Preference was a failure, and indeed was probably a blunder, since it implied an attempt to return to that material basis of imperial unity which had formed the core of the old colonial system, and had led to the most unhappy results in regard to the American colonies. But at least it was an attempt to realise a fuller unity than had yet been achieved. Whether these ideas can contri-

bute to the ultimate solution of the imperial problem or not, it was at least a good thing that the question should be raised and discussed.

One further feature among the many developments of this era must not be left untouched. It is the rise of a definitely national spirit in the greater members of the Empire. To this a great encouragement has been given by the political unity which some of these communities for the first time attained during these years. National sentiment in the Dominion of Canada was stimulated into existence by the Federation of 1867. The unification of Australia which was at length achieved in the Federation of 1900 did not indeed create, but it greatly strengthened, the rise of a similar spirit of Australian nationality. A national spirit in South Africa, merging in itself the hostile racial sentiments of Boer and Briton, may well prove to be the happiest result of the Union of South Africa. In India also a national spirit was coming to birth, bred among a deeply divided people by the political unity, the peace, and the equal laws, which have been the greatest gifts of British rule; its danger was that it might be too quick to imagine that the unity which makes nationhood can be created merely by means of resolutions declaring that it exists, but the desire to create it is an altogether healthy desire. On the surface it might appear that the rise of a national spirit in the great members of the Empire is a danger to the ideal of imperial unity; but that need not be so, and if it were so, the danger

must be faced, since the national spirit is too valuable a force to be restricted. The sense of nationhood is the inevitable outcome of the freedom and co-operation which the British system everywhere encourages; to attempt to repress it lest it should endanger imperial unity would be as short-sighted as the old attempt to restrict the natural growth of self-government because it also seemed a danger to imperial unity. The essence of the British system is the free development of natural tendencies, and the encouragement of variety of types; and the future towards which the Empire seems to be tending is not that of a highly centralised and unified state, but that of a brotherhood of free nations, united by community of ideas and institutions, co-operating for many common ends, but each freely following the natural trend of its own development.

That is the conception of empire, unlike any other ever entertained by men upon this planet, which was already shaping itself among the British communities when the terrible ordeal of the Great War came to test it, and to prove as not even the staunchest believer could have anticipated, that it was capable of standing the severest trial which men or institutions have ever had to undergo.

IX

TOWARDS THE CATACLYSM, 1900-1914

I

The early years of the twentieth century, like the years before the outbreak of the French Revolution, will always appear to historians to have been clouded by the shadow of coming catastrophe. And the judgment will be a true one, though most of those who lived through these years paid as little regard to the thunder-laden clouds which overhung them as the people of Pompeii paid to the volcano that was to destroy them—an occasional uneasy glance; then back again to business and pleasure.

In this chapter it is our business to analyse the part that was played by the imperialist ambitions of the Great Powers during these critical years in preparing the catastrophe. In attempting this task we enter upon a field of acute controversy. A whole library of books upon the causes of the Great War have been written since its conclusion. There have been minute and meticulous examinations of the fortnight of fevered diplomacy which preceded the outbreak of hostilities. None of them has succeeded in disturbing the conviction which most qualified observers formed at the

time: that either Germany or Austria could have prevented the war, if they had so willed, without loss of dignity; that they failed to do so; and that none of the other negotiators had this choice in their hands. There have been searching examinations of the diplomatic documents of the years preceding the war, which have been published in immense abundance. They show that in all the Foreign Offices there was a dreadful anticipation of coming catastrophe, against which all the powers were making feverish military preparations; and that there was everywhere a fear lest war might be precipitated before these preparations were completed, or an inclination to precipitate it in order to take advantage of a momentary superiority. This was the outcome of the division of Europe into two rival groups. For that state of things some blame the creation of the Triple Entente, or the earlier conclusion of the Franco-Russian alliance. But these were combinations of powers which had no real community of interest save their common fear of the formidable Triple Alliance, and of the ends to which they believed it was being turned by the inordinate ambitions of its leader, Germany. If the division of Europe into rival groups is to be regarded as the ultimate cause of the war, then the formation of the Triple Alliance under Germany's control, as long ago as 1882, must be regarded as the decisive fact, because this made the creation of a counterpoise-group inevitable. In this dismal state of things it was natural that there should be in all the armed

powers, and especially among their soldiers, groups of men who looked forward to the inevitable conflict not with dread but with glee, and who made plans as to the gains which they hoped to win from victory. They played upon the fears of their fellow-countrymen in order to stimulate the war-spirit: in Germany upon the fear of 'encirclement'; in France upon the memory of 1870, and the alarm aroused by the frequent indications of an unreined ambition which the German government afforded during these years. Some of the most powerful public men in France and Russia, convinced that war must come, had brought themselves into a frame of mind in which they were ready to welcome it: this frame of mind is apparent, for example, in the letters of Poincaré the French Premier and Isvolski the Russian ambassador in Paris between 1911 and 1913. But it would be wholly unjust to charge them with having caused the war, however warmly we may reprobate their attitude. The temper which they expressed was immeasurably more potent in Germany than in any other country: in no country save Germany could there have appeared, or won a welcome, such a book by a responsible staff-officer as General Bernhardi's *Germany and the Next War*, in which he foretold many of the main features of the coming conflict, insisted that Germany must fight at once in order to secure 'world-power' and to avoid 'downfall,' condemned the anaemic sentimentalism which clung to peace, lauded war as the test of national virility

and as Nature's method of ensuring the survival of the fittest among nations. If the existence of a warlike temper in one nation or another was the cause of war, assuredly Germany had her full share of responsibility.

Unquestionably Europe was in a very dangerous condition: the powder-magazine might explode at any moment unless responsible statesmen and public opinion in all countries showed great restraint. That country which showed least self-restraint, least readiness to curb its own ambitions, was in this state of things most responsible for creating the conditions which made war almost inevitable.

If European questions alone had been at issue—if the only danger had arisen from the long rivalries of the European states—the needful restraint might have been displayed. But questions far vaster than any purely European problems had arisen. The standard of world-power had been established, and this new ideal had dwarfed the old problems of European rivalry. By 1900 the world had been divided out among the candidates for world-power. And at the end of the division Germany, the greatest of the European states, found that she was left with the smallest share of extra-European power. Her rivals, east and west, had obtained giants' shares. As their empires were developed and consolidated, they must (or so it seemed) become more formidable. Given the new measure of greatness in states that seemed now to have been established, it might well appear

to be a matter of life and death for Germany that she should achieve effective world-power before it was too late. This, surely, is the meaning of the perpetual insistence of Bernhardi and others that it was for Germany a choice of *Weltmacht oder Niedergang*: either she must achieve a world-empire on a worthy scale, or she must sink into the second rank among nations. This conviction made her a source of unrest throughout the years from 1900 to 1914; it may be described, not unfairly, as the real underlying cause of the war. Down to the last years of the nineteenth century Germany had been, upon the whole, a buttress of peace in Europe, because at first she was content with a purely national greatness, and with the obvious hegemony which she enjoyed in Europe; and later, when the ambition of world-power got hold of her, she was able to find some satisfaction for it in the rapid annexation of African territories, and in the hope of empire in the Far East. But when the process of partition was completed, as it was by 1900, and when the gates of ambition in the Far East were slammed against her by the Anglo-Japanese alliance of 1902, her temper almost inevitably changed. She became the chief source of unrest, because in the following years she was trying in every direction for possible outlets and means of expansion, and everywhere found the way barred against her, save in the South-East, where she conceived the grandiose project of a continuous power extending from Berlin to Bagdad. Gradually she was brought to contem-

plate the necessity of a war for world-power; and when the occasion came in 1914 she used it; not, perhaps, deliberately fomenting war, but not unwilling to welcome it at a moment very favourable to herself.

If this view of the forces that were at work in these years is a sound one, the real, ultimate cause of the World-War is to be found in the growth and rivalries of the world-powers which we have been tracing, and in the fact that the strongest and proudest of the European peoples had been left behind in the race, and refused to accept this result as final. Regarded in this light, all the strains and perils of the years before the war become intelligible, and the conduct of Germany in the final crisis becomes more explicable.

But if we are to do justice to the painful and thrilling drama of these years, it will be well to review the character of the group of giant-empires, each far surpassing in size the ancient empire of Rome, and each drawing its strength mainly or wholly from a nation-state of European stock, into whose hands the political destinies of the world seemed to have fallen.

II

The oldest, and (by the rough tests of area, population, and natural resources) by far the greatest of these new composite world-states, was the British Empire, which included 12,000,000 square miles, or one-quarter of the land-surface

of the globe. It rested upon the wealth, vigour, and skill of a population of 45,000,000 in the homeland, to which might be added, but only by their own consent, the resources of five young daughter-nations, whose population only amounted to about 15,000,000. Thus it stood upon a rather narrow foundation. And while it was the greatest, it was also beyond comparison the most loosely organised of all these empires. It was rather a partnership of a multitude of states in every grade of civilisation than an organised and consolidated dominion. Five of its chief members were completely self-governing, and shared in the common burdens only by their own free will. All the remaining members were organised as distinct units, though subject to the general control of the home government. The resources of each unit were employed exclusively for the development of its own welfare. They paid no tribute; they were not required to provide any soldiers beyond the minimum needed for their own defence and the maintenance of internal order. This empire, in short, was not in any degree organised for military purposes. It possessed no great land-army, and was, therefore, incapable of threatening the existence of any of its rivals. It depended for its defence firstly upon its own admirable strategic distribution, since it was open to attack at singularly few points otherwise than from the sea; it depended mainly, for that reason, upon naval power, and secure command of the sea-roads by which its

members were linked was absolutely vital to its existence. Only by sea-power (which is always weak in the offensive) could it threaten its neighbours or rivals; and its sea-power, during four centuries, had always, in war, been employed to resist the threatened domination of any single power, and had never, in time of peace, been employed to restrict the freedom of movement of any of the world's peoples. On the contrary, the Freedom of the Seas had been established by its victories, and dated from the date of its ascendancy. The life-blood of this empire was trade; its supreme interest was manifestly peace. The conception of the meaning of empire which had been developed by its history was not a conception of dominion for dominion's sake, or of the exploitation of subjects for the advantage of a master. On the contrary, it had come to mean (especially during the nineteenth century) a trust; a trust to be administered in the interests of the subjects primarily, and secondarily in the interests of the whole civilised world. That this is not the assertion of a theory or an ideal, but of a fact and a practice, is sufficiently demonstrated by two unquestionable facts: the first, that the units which formed this empire were not only free from all tribute in money or men, but were not even required to make any contribution towards the upkeep of the fleet, upon which the safety of all depended; the second, that every port and every market in this vast empire, so far as they were under the control of the central

government, were thrown open as freely to the citizens of all other states as to its own. Finally, in this empire there had never been any attempt to impose a uniformity of method or even of laws upon the infinitely various societies which it included: it not merely permitted, it cultivated and admired, varieties of type, and to the maximum practicable degree believed in self-government. Because these were the principles upon which it was administered, the real strength of this empire was far greater than it appeared. But beyond question it was ill-prepared and ill-organised for war; desiring peace beyond all things, and having given internal peace to one-quarter of the earth's population, it was apt to be over-sanguine about the maintenance of peace. And if a great clash of empires should come, this was likely to tell against it.

The second oldest—perhaps it ought to be described as the oldest—of the world-empires, and the second largest in area, was the Russian Empire, which covered 8,500,000 square miles of territory. Its strength was that its vast domains formed a single continuous block, and that its population was far more homogeneous than that of its rivals, three out of four of its subjects being either of the Russian or of kindred Slavonic stock. Its weaknesses were that it was almost land-locked, nearly the whole of its immense coast-line being either inaccessible, or ice-bound during half of the year; and that it had not adopted modern methods of government, being subject

to a despotism, working through an inefficient, tyrannical, and corrupt bureaucracy. In the event of a European war it was further bound to suffer from the facts that its means of communication and its capacity for the movement of great armies were ill-developed; and that it was far behind all its rivals in the control of industrial machinery and applied science, upon which modern warfare depends, and without which the greatest wealth of man-power is ineffective. At the opening of the twentieth century Russia was still pursuing the policy of Eastward expansion at the expense of China, which the other Western powers had been compelled to abandon by the formation of the Anglo-Japanese alliance. Able to bring pressure upon China from the landward side, she was not deterred by the naval predominance which this alliance enjoyed, and she still hoped to control Manchuria and to dominate the policy of China. But these aims brought her in conflict with Japan, who had been preparing for the conflict ever since 1895. The outcome of the war (1904), which ended in a disastrous Russian defeat, had the most profound influence upon the politics of the world. It led to an internal revolution in Russia. It showed that the feet of the colossus were of clay, and that her bureaucratic government was grossly corrupt and incompetent. It forbade Russia to take an effective part in the critical events of the following years, and notably disabled her from checking the progress of German and Austrian ascendancy in the Balkans. The

weakness of Russia in the years following the Japanese war undoubtedly encouraged Germany in the belief that now was the time for resolute action.

Measured by the crude test of area, the third of the great empires was that of France, which included some 5,000,000 square miles, or nearly one-tenth of the land-surface of the globe. Some fragments of it, negligible in size, had survived from the earlier French colonial empire of the eighteenth century; one valuable province, that of Algeria, which had been incorporated as a department and was represented in the French parliament, had been acquired in the first half of the nineteenth century. But the great bulk of this immense empire was a mushroom growth, dating only from the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Its principal section consisted of a huge compact block stretching across the western half of North Africa from the Mediterranean to the Guinea coast. The French Empire included some peoples—the Berbers of North Africa and the peoples of Indo-China—who had in the past shown a capacity for civilisation. But in the main it was a dominion over primitive peoples, some of whom belonged to virile stocks, and offered a useful source of recruitment for the French army, which a dwindling population made it difficult to maintain on a parity with the army of Germany. Very little of the French Empire was suitable for white settlement: in any case, France had no surplus of population to send abroad.

Hence this empire was, in a higher degree than its rivals, dependent upon the home-country, whose population numbered only 39,000,000 and was gradually declining.

By the same rough test of area, which we have applied in the case of the other world-powers, the United States came fourth; for her empire included only 3,600,000 square miles, of which 3,000,000 belonged to the home-territory. But this territory was as compact and continuous as that of Russia, and unlike the Russian Empire, it was nearly all good land, rich in every kind of natural wealth, and eminently adapted to be the home of white peoples; while it had long sea-coasts, full of fine harbours, on two oceans. It was occupied by a rapidly growing population drawn mainly from the best European stocks: no other white man's state could be compared with it in numbers or in wealth. When the Great War came, nearly one-fourth of the whole white population of the world were citizens of the United States; and though they formed only about 8 per cent of the world's population, they possessed 25 per cent of the world's wheat-supply, and a yet higher proportion of all the other main forms of wealth, coal and iron, oil and cotton. In every source of material power, the American Empire thus outweighed all the rest; and had her people chosen to organise themselves for war, they would have been irresistible. But they had no need of the resources of the backward lands for which the other empires were striving. For this

reason they had assumed only a negligible share of the responsibility for the governance of the non-European world which the other empires were lightly undertaking; and they were inclined to make a virtue of this disinterestedness. Separated by three thousand miles from Europe, and having no one to fear, they stood aloof from the rivalries of the other world-empires, and escaped the burdens of militarism. Yet they could not fail to be interested, seeing that they were themselves drawn from all the European stocks. But this in itself provided another reason for aloofness. The difficult task of welding into a nation masses of people of the most heterogeneous races had been made yet more difficult by the enormous flood of immigrants, mainly from the northern, eastern, and south-eastern parts of Europe, which had poured into America during the last generation: they proved to be in many ways harder to digest than their predecessors, and they tended, in a dangerous way, to live apart and to organise themselves as separate communities. The presence of these organised groups made it sometimes hard for the United States to maintain a quite clear and distinctive attitude in the discussions of the powers, most of which had, as it were, definite bodies of advocates among her citizens; and it was perhaps in part for this reason that she had tended to fall back again to that attitude of aloofness towards the affairs of the non-American world from which she seemed to have begun to depart in the later years of the last century. Although

she had herself taken a hand in the imperialist activities of the 'nineties, the general attitude of her citizens towards the imperialist controversies of Europe was one of contempt or undiscriminating condemnation. Her old tradition of isolation from the affairs of Europe was still very strong—still the dominating factor in her policy. She had not yet grasped (indeed, who, in any country, had ?) the political consequences of the new era of world-economy into which we have passed. And therefore she could not see that the titanic conflict of empires which was looming ahead was of an altogether different character from the old conflicts of the European states, and that it must involve, for good or ill, the fortunes of the whole globe. Even when the war began she clung with obstinate faith to the belief that her tradition of aloofness might still be maintained. It is not surprising, when we consider how deep-rooted this tradition was, that it took two and a half years of carnage and horror to convert her from it.

There was no other world-power which could compare in mere magnitude with the four giants—the British, the Russian, the French, and the American Empires. Holland still preserved a rich dominion in the Malay Archipelago of some 730,000 square miles, but she did not aspire to rank among the Great Powers ; nor did Portugal, though she preserved a stagnant dominion of nearly 1,000,000 square miles in tropical Africa ; nor little Belgium, though the rich valley of the Congo had fallen to

her lot. Italy, filled with the pride of her recently won unity, and stimulated by the memories of old Rome, longed to rank among the imperial powers; but she had only contrived to acquire some 200,000 square miles of torrid land on the borders of the Red Sea, a dominion of no value.

Even Germany, the most powerful and the proudest state in Europe, had to be content with 1,500,000 square miles of territory. She felt herself dwarfed by the four giants. She felt that unless she acquired a world-empire worthy of her position in Europe and the world, she must in time sink to the second or third rank. She demanded her 'place in the sun.' Convinced—not without reason—that her people had shown a greater capacity for disciplined industry and a deeper respect for ordered knowledge than any other nation of the West, and conscious that her resources were far greater in proportion to the extent of her dominions than those of the European rivals who had distanced her in the race, she had become fixed in the resolve that these inequalities should be rectified in her favour. She would not submit to fall into the second rank among states. It was natural that she should feel thus; natural, also, in view of her traditions and the methods by which her position had been established, that she should be ready to seek the satisfaction of her ambitions by force, if it could be attained in no other way. For the achievement of oversea dominion naval power was obviously necessary.

Until the close of the nineteenth century the German navy had been of the third rank. In 1899 Germany set out to create a naval power which should be able to give pause to any rival, however great. By a remarkable effort of organisation she succeeded within a dozen years in raising her fleet to a strength and efficiency greater than that of the British fleet before the effort began: when the Great War opened, it was almost strong enough to challenge the British navy on equal terms—it could fight the battle of Jutland. Britain, whose existence depended upon the navy, was forced into a competition of armaments, and no persuasion could bring Germany to stop or even retard her strenuous construction. German writers and naval officers made no secret of their belief that a challenge to the naval power of Britain must be the next step in the triumphant progress of their country. The Kaiser himself proclaimed that her future lay on the sea: this was the way to world-power. Scarcely able to credit the seriousness of this challenge, Britain was nevertheless driven to change her international policy; and with momentous results, departed from the attitude of aloofness from European conflicts which she had hitherto maintained, and was drawn into a gradually increasing intimacy with the powers arrayed against Germany.

Meanwhile Germany strove for new outlets, using every means to attain the ' place in the sun ' she was determined to obtain. The tale of these efforts, and of the means by which they were

countered, fills the years from 1900 to the Great War. At every point, because of her ambition to achieve world-power, Germany was the disturbing factor.

III

In an earlier chapter we have glanced at the many schemes which floated before the minds of colonial enthusiasts in Germany. Hitherto they had all come to nothing. They were not abandoned; in one guise or another German agents were actively at work in many parts of the world, waiting for opportunities and striving to create them.

But during the early years of the twentieth century German hopes came to be increasingly fixed upon an ambitious project which promised better than all the rest: the project of establishing a continuous domination from the North Sea to the Persian Gulf. This project depended upon the possibility of obtaining an intimate union with the Austro-Hungarian Empire—a union closer than a mere defensive alliance—together with an effective control over the decadent Turkish Empire, and a sufficient influence among the little Balkan States to ensure through communication. It was thus a scheme which depended not upon conquest and annexation, but upon diplomatic influence and economic penetration.

No doubt it would be a mistake to suggest that this grandiose project was deliberately planned and systematically carried out. It took shape

gradually, as the course of events offered opportunities. But the course of events was favourable, and as the immense possibilities of development in this direction opened out, the scheme became the darling project of German statecraft. If all the lands between the North Sea and the Persian Gulf could be effectively welded together under German leadership, they would extend to some 2,500,000 square miles, with a population of 150,000,000. This formidable power or group of powers would form a compact mass, occupying a central position in the old world, threatening the Russian Empire on one side and Egypt and India on the other; it would have access to the North Sea, the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean, yet its communications would not be at the mercy of sea-power. It is not surprising that a prospect so dazzling should have gradually captivated the imagination of many Germans, and appeared to be worth effort and sacrifice. The thoughts of Germany turned more and more towards the East. To Bismarck it had seemed that the Balkans were not worth the bones of a single Pomeranian grenadier. In the eyes of his successors their value had been so much enhanced that they were worth the risks and horrors of a universal war. It was no accident that the immediate occasion of the Great War was a Balkan question.

During the years before the war this vague but grandiose project gradually took shape. In the first place, the alliance with Austro-Hungary became much more intimate, and the Habsburg

empire sank to be almost a vassal of Germany. Bismarck had used the Austrian alliance as a means of maintaining peace : he had supplemented it by a Reinsurance Treaty with Russia, so that both powers were made to feel that they must not take any aggressive action in the Balkans, where they were rivals, without Germany's consent. But the Reinsurance Treaty was denounced in 1891 ; and now Austria felt that she could count upon German support for a forward policy in the Balkans. The ascendancy of the ruling races in Austro-Hungary (Germans in Austria, Magyars in Hungary) was threatened by nationalist movements among their subject peoples, especially the Slavs of Croatia and Slavonia, who were tending to turn towards their brothers in Serbia. To subjugate Serbia seemed almost a necessity for the maintenance of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and this became a prime object of Austrian policy from 1903 onwards. But a docile Serbia was equally necessary for the great scheme of German expansion, since the railways to Salonika and Constantinople ran through Serbia. The progressive subjection of Austrian policy to German influence was one of the most marked features of the ten years before the Great War.

Over Turkish policy, also, Germany acquired a dominating influence, greater than any of the successive protectors of Turkey had enjoyed during the nineteenth century. In the last years of the nineteenth century, under the abominable rule of Abdul Hamid, Turkey was in bad odour with

Europe; for Abdul Hamid was carrying out massacres of the Armenians which put the Bulgarian atrocities of the 'seventies into the shade. In 1897 Germany was able to win the lasting gratitude of the Turkish government by intervening between it and the other European powers who were protesting against the massacres. From that date Germany was all-powerful in Turkey. The Turkish army was reorganised under her control, and placed under the command of German generals. Most of the Turkish railways were acquired and managed by German companies. And presently the long-planned scheme of the Bagdad railway, which was to bring about the economic and military reorganisation of Asiatic Turkey, was set on foot under German management. It was nearly completed when the war broke out. The practical protectorate over Turkey which had thus been established gave to Germany a ground for posing as the patron of Mahomedanism throughout the world, since the Sultan of Turkey was the head of the Mahomedan religion. In 1898, and again in 1904, the Kaiser made flamboyant speeches in which he invited Mahomedans everywhere to look to him as their protector. Most of the Mahomedans outside the Ottoman Empire were subjects of Britain, France, and Russia.

In 1908 Abdul Hamid was deposed by the Young Turks; and this revolution gave a shock, for a time, to the German ascendancy, especially as Austria, with German encouragement, seized the occasion to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina, still

nominally Turkish provinces, though mainly inhabited by Slavs of the Serbian stock. But the check was only momentary. The Young Turks were as amenable to influence or corruption as their predecessors. Their leaders, Enver and Talaat, were consumed with military ambitions, and profoundly admired the military skill of the Germans: they soon returned to German suzerainty. A second shock was given to German influence when in 1911 Italy, the sleeping partner of the Triple Alliance, attacked and conquered the Turkish province of Tripoli. Germany did her best to restrain Italy, but in vain; and the loyalty of the Turks was strained to breaking-point. But in the next year the position was restored, when the Turkish power in Europe was almost destroyed by the Balkan League, and they had no protectors to look to save Germany and Austria. When the Great War came, though the German power in Turkey was still a precarious influence rather than an established authority, it was strong enough to bring Turkey into the war on the German side.

To establish a similar ascendancy over the Balkan states was more difficult; for the Turk was the secular foe of all of them, and Austria stood in the way of the nationalist ambitions of both Serbia and Rumania: to bring these little states into an effective partnership with their natural enemies seemed an all but impossible task. Yet a good deal was done. In two of the four chief Balkan states German princes occupied the

thrones—a Hohenzollern in Rumania, a Coburger in Bulgaria; and in Greece the heir-apparent, Constantine, was honoured with the hand of the Kaiser's sister. Western peoples imagined that the day had gone by when the policy of states could be deflected by such facts, especially as the Balkan states all had democratic parliamentary constitutions. But kings could still play a great part in countries where the bulk of the electorate was illiterate, and where most of the class of professional politicians were open to bribes; and so German kings were able to show their German sympathies very effectually. King Carol of Rumania actually signed a secret treaty of alliance with Germany without consulting his ministers of Parliament. King Ferdinand of Bulgaria was able, in the end, to draw his subjects into an alliance with the Turks, who had massacred their fathers, against the Russians, who had saved them from destruction. King Constantine of Greece was able to keep his country out of the war at a moment when his government was anxious to join the Allies; and to place every kind of difficulty in the way of the allied campaign in Salonika.

But kings could not do everything. They were not able, indeed they did not try, to prevent the formation of the Balkan League which in 1912 brought Bulgaria, Serbia, and Greece together in a common attack upon the Turk. This war, and the unexpected downfall of the Turkish power in Europe which was its result, gravely imperilled the great combination upon

which Germany was learning to pin her hopes. If the League had held together, a new and happier era might have dawned for the Balkans; but a dangerously independent block would have been established between Germany and Austria and the Turkish Empire. Unhappily for the Balkans and the world, but happily for German and Austrian ambitions, the League broke up over the question of the division of the spoils: it was the intervention of Austria which made their original agreement impracticable. Bulgaria made war against her recent allies, and was defeated. Isolated and embittered, she was now ready to use any means of restoring her position; and this led her to put her trust in Germany. The Balkan League broke up in 1913—the year before the Great War. If it had not broken up, the Great War would probably not have taken place.

After this episode, Serbia—now greatly strengthened, and in control of the main railway lines of the Balkans—was the chief obstacle in the way of the Great Design, especially as she was now more dangerous to Austria than ever. Austria had long been anxious to attack her: she had been on the point of doing so in 1909, in 1912, in 1913: she had even gone so far as to prepare forged documents to justify the attack. On each occasion Germany had restrained her. In 1914 a new occasion came, with the murder of the Archduke at Sarajevo. Germany might have used her influence then as readily as before. She did not choose to do so; perhaps because Serbia's over-

throw was necessary for the Great Design; perhaps because Germany's preparations for war were more perfect than they had ever been, and all the possible opponents were suffering from troubles at home which made it likely that they would stand aloof and look on while Serbia was crushed. In any case, it was the growing interest of Germany in Balkan and Turkish questions which made the war possible.

We have dwelt upon the great Berlin-Bagdad scheme, inchoate and indefinite as it was, partly because it afforded the chief outlet for German hopes and ambitions during these years; partly because it showed how the desire to find some means of obtaining a sort of world-power comparable with that of the four giants was driving Germany into a policy which gravely endangered peace; partly because it illustrates the constant anxieties of these years, and provided the actual occasion of the war. But in doing so we have lost touch with chronology, and it is necessary to return to the other stirring events of the period.

IV

The resolution of Germany to carve out for herself a world-empire worthy of her rank in the world was the dominating fact of the years from 1900 to 1914. And since, in a now partitioned world, she could scarcely attain this end save at the expense of one or more of the existing world-empires, these naturally began to draw together

in self-defence. The growing closeness of their combination was as marked a feature of these years as the increasing control wielded by Germany over Austria and Turkey.

France and Russia had formed an alliance in 1891—after Bismarck had fallen, and his policy of restraint had been reversed. But their alliance had not at first been very intimate. It was only when Russia realised her weakness in the Japanese war, and when she saw that Germany was backing the activities of Austria in the Balkans, that the alliance became intimate, and detailed plans were worked out by the allies for combined action in an anticipated war.

But the most significant feature of these years was the withdrawal of Britain from her traditional attitude of isolation, and her gradual association with the Franco-Russian group. This was a remarkable change. Until the last years of the nineteenth century Britain had been consistently friendly towards Germany: as late as 1898 Chamberlain had proposed an alliance between Britain, Germany, and America. France and Russia, on the other hand, she had always regarded as her most dangerous rivals; she had watched with anxiety the activities of Russia in Central Asia, and of France in Africa and Indo-China; and all her naval programmes had been calculated on the basis of the combined naval strength of these two powers. But now there came a sudden change in the direction of British policy. The reason of the change was unmistakable. It was

due to the strenuous activity of Germany in the creation of a powerful navy, and the declared resolve not only of important organs of German opinion, but of the Kaiser himself, that Germany's future lay upon the sea, that she must win 'the admiralty of the Atlantic,' that 'the trident must be in her hands.' If any power but Britain herself held 'the trident' which she had wielded throughout the modern age, the very existence of the British Empire, and the livelihood of the inhabitants of the British islands, would be imperilled. No challenge was so certain to arouse the anger and resolve of Britain as a challenge to the sea-power which was the very breath of her life.

The challenge did not drive her to make formal alliance with Germany's rivals: she did not do that until after the outbreak of war. But it made her feel that it would be wise to remove the causes of friction which had alienated her from these powers. Accordingly, in 1904 she made an agreement or 'Entente' with France, which was followed in 1907 by a similar agreement with Russia: the three biggest world-powers came to an understanding with one another.

These agreements were in no sense alliances, even of a defensive kind; they included no agreements, open or secret, for future military co-operation; nor did they contain any reference to the fears of German aggression which had brought them about. Both were entirely concerned with the removal of existing causes of friction. They

would not have been incompatible with similar understandings with Germany or any other power, and indeed Britain strove hard to reach such an understanding with Germany.

The Franco-British agreement healed, for example, a quarrel two hundred years old about fishing rights in Newfoundland. Its chief provisions were that France recognised the position of Britain in Egypt, and brought to an end the incessant opposition which had hampered the reconstruction of that country; while Britain recognised France's prior right to intervene in Morocco, which she had hitherto denied. A part of the understanding was the adoption of a treaty of arbitration between the two countries which became the model for scores of similar treaties between other countries in the following years. In the same way, the Russo-British agreement dealt with points upon which there had been friction between the two countries in Asia: Russia promised not to interfere in Tibet, where the activities of her agents had recently alarmed the government of India; and spheres of interest for the two powers, with a neutral zone between, were marked out in Persia. The agreement about Persia—made without any consultation of that country—was in itself undesirable, and led to unhappy results; but at least it put an end to a rivalry that might have been dangerous. It is significant that both of these agreements were concerned with territories outside Europe. They were agreements between world-empires, whereby

definite risks of clash between them were removed. Neither openly nor secretly was there anything more in them than this ; and so far as they went, they were contributions to the peace of the world.

But they made cordial diplomatic co-operation possible between the three world-powers ; and it was this which gave them their significance. They would not have been made if the powers which made them had not come to the conclusion that co-operation, at least in the diplomatic sphere, was desirable. What drove them to this conclusion was their common distrust of German policy ; and to this extent the agreements can fairly be described as aimed against Germany, though neither agreement contained any suggestion of common action for this purpose. Henceforth, however, the three powers did in fact co-operate more or less consistently in the diplomatic sphere ; and they nearly always found themselves in opposition to Germany. They held, and no doubt rightly held, that they were acting solely for the maintenance of peace ; and, in fact, they succeeded in staving off several successive crises. But it was not unnatural that Germany should regard these arrangements as an agreement between the three giant-empires who had divided the greater part of the world between them to deny her the satisfaction of her legitimate ambitions.

In both of these agreements Britain assumed no obligations of any kind to give support to her new friends either in a military or in a diplomatic form, and she was careful throughout the years

of their co-operation to guard herself against any definite commitment of this sort. She was so careful that when the crisis came both France and Russia were quite uncertain whether they could count upon her assistance or not; though they begged her to declare herself on their side, and though they knew that her support was vital to them, neither of them ever even hinted that she was under any obligation to give it.

But in fact Britain was to some extent bound in honour, not by the agreements but by the co-operation which followed them: she could not decently leave in the lurch friends with whom she had acted, if they pursued an honourable and straightforward policy. To a certain extent, also, she was bound by the agreements themselves. If the position of Russia in Persia had been challenged (which fortunately never happened) Britain would have found it difficult to refuse her support to Russia. And when the position of France in Morocco was actually challenged, Britain was bound in honour to support her.

So much was this the case that on the two occasions (1906 and 1911) when the Morocco question threatened to bring about war, French and British officers took counsel together to devise a plan of joint military action in case of need. On each occasion the British government was careful to make it plain that this involved no commitment, and that Britain could not be drawn into any war until Parliament had agreed; and on the second occasion, in 1911, these declarations

were embodied in formal notes interchanged between the two governments, in order that there might be no possibility of misunderstanding. But however frank and scrupulous these declarations might be, it was obvious that the practice of co-operation necessarily involved, in certain events, honourable obligations. Whether it was safe and right to assume these obligations is a question which will long be argued. The answer will depend upon the answers to two other questions: whether, in the circumstances of that time, it was either possible or safe for Britain to remain in complete isolation; and whether, in the last resort, she could have avoided the necessity of taking her share in a war upon which so much depended. At a later stage in this critical time Britain found herself drawn into an obligation more definite than she had yet assumed, though it was still an obligation of honour, not of definite contract. In 1912 the German naval menace had become so formidable that the main strength of the British navy had to be concentrated in the North Sea; and the Mediterranean was almost denuded of ships. By an agreement with France, which was generally known—the results of it, indeed, could not have been concealed—the French fleet was concentrated in the Mediterranean. This arrangement, which was held to be necessary for the safeguarding of the seas, involved at the very least an obligation of honour to defend the coasts of France should she be the victim of an aggressive attack. But it also ensured that France would be

careful not to run the risk, by any aggressive action on her part, of forfeiting the protection which the British fleet could give.

In any case, the agreements of 1904 and 1907, and the diplomatic co-operation which followed them, brought Britain into a closer involvement in the European imbroglio than she had ever hitherto accepted. Three of the four giant-empires were linked together in a resolve to prevent a violent disturbance of the *status quo* by the ambitions and dissatisfied power of Germany. The lists were set for the great clash of empires. It only remained to be seen whether this clash could by any means be averted; and as time passed, and Germany chafed more restlessly against the restraint on her ambitions, the chance of averting it seemed to become less and less.

Two main groups of difficulties emerged during these years, each of which repeatedly brought the world to the verge of war. In both the difficulty arose directly or indirectly from the restless desire of Germany to find an outlet for her ambitions and a bigger 'place in the sun.' The one arose from the situation in Morocco, and primarily concerned France; the other sprang from the situation in the Balkans, and specially involved Austria and Russia. Both bore upon the development of the control of the European world-powers over the non-European world. It will be convenient to deal with them separately, though they overlapped chronologically.

V

Morocco is a part of that single region of mountainous North Africa of which France already controlled the remainder, Tunis and Algeria. Peoples of the same type inhabited the whole region, but while in Tunis and Algeria they were being brought under the influence of law and order, in Morocco they remained in anarchy. Only a conventional line divided Morocco from Algeria, and the anarchy among the tribesmen on one side of the line inevitably had an unhappy effect upon the people on the other side of the line. More than once France had been compelled, for the sake of Algeria, to intervene in Morocco. It is impossible to exaggerate the anarchy which existed in the interior of this rich and wasted country. It was, indeed, the most lawless region remaining in the world: when Mr. Bernard Shaw wished to find a scene for a play in which the hero should be a brigand chief leading a band of rascals and outlaws from all countries, Morocco presented the only possible scene remaining in the world. And this anarchy was the more unfortunate, not only because the country was naturally rich and ought to have been prosperous, but also because it lay in close proximity to the great civilised states, and on one of the main routes of commerce at the entrance to the Mediterranean. In its ports a considerable traffic was carried on by European traders, but this traffic was, owing to the anarchic condi-

tion of the country, nothing like as great as it ought to have been. In 1905, 39 per cent. of it was controlled by French traders, 32 per cent. by British traders, 12 per cent. by German traders, and 5 per cent. by Spanish traders. Manifestly this was a region where law and order ought to be established, in the interests of civilisation. The powers most directly concerned were in the first place France, with her neighbouring territory and her preponderant trade; in the second place Britain, whose strategic interests as well as her trading interests were involved; in the third place Spain, which directly faced the Morocco coast; while Germany had only trading interests involved, and so long as these were safeguarded, had no legitimate ground of complaint. If any single power was to intervene, manifestly the first claim was upon France. On the other hand, Germany saw in Morocco one of the few remaining unannexed territories which might help to satisfy her desire for world-power; and she was reluctant to see it added to the already huge French Empire. This, as she justly concluded, was likely to be the result of French intervention.

In 1900 France had directed the attention of Europe to the disorderly condition of Morocco, and had proposed to intervene to restore order, on the understanding that she should not annex the country, or interfere with the trading rights of other nations. Some states agreed; Germany made no reply, but made no objection. But owing to the opposition of Britain, who was then

MOROCCO
ALGERIA
TUNIS
TRIPOLI
THE ATLAS LANDS
1: 22,000,000
Statute Miles
0 100 200 300
Land over 3000 feet
Desert Regions
GEORGE PHILIP & SON LTD

on bad terms with France and feared to see an unfriendly power controlling the entrance to the Mediterranean, no action was taken; and in the next years the chaos in Morocco grew worse. By the agreement of 1904 Britain withdrew her objection to French intervention, and recognised the prior political rights of France in Morocco, on the condition that the existing government of Morocco should be maintained, that none of its territory should be annexed, and that 'the open door' should be preserved for the trade of all nations. But, of course, it was possible, and even probable, that the existing Moroccan government could not be made efficient. In that case, what should happen? The possibility had to be contemplated by reasonable statesmen, and provided against. But to do so in a public treaty would have been to condemn beforehand the existing system. Therefore a hypothetical arrangement was made for this possible future event in a secret treaty, to which Spain was made a party; whereby it was provided that if the arrangement should break down, and France should establish a definite protectorate, the vital part of the north coast should pass under the control of Spain.

To the public part of these arrangements, which alone were of immediate importance, no objection was made by any of the other powers, and the German Chancellor told the Reichstag that German interests were not affected. France accordingly drew up a scheme of reforms in the government

of Morocco, which the Sultan was invited to accept. But before he had accepted them the German Kaiser suddenly came to Tangier in his yacht, had an interview with the Sultan in which he urged him to reject the French demands, and made a public speech in which he declared himself the protector of the Mahomedans, asserted that no European power had special rights in Morocco, and announced his determination to support the 'independence and integrity' of Morocco. What was the reason for this sudden intervention—made without any previous communication with France? The main reason was that France's ally, Russia, had just been severely defeated by Japan, and would not be able to take part in a European war. Therefore, it appeared, France might be bullied; Britain might not be willing to risk war on such an issue; the Entente of 1904 might be destroyed; the extension of French influence might be prevented; and the preservation of a state of anarchy in Morocco would leave open the chance of a seizure of that country by Germany at a later date. But this scheme did not succeed. The Entente held firm. Britain gave steady support to France, as indeed she was bound in honour to do; and in the end a conference of the powers was held at Algeçiras (Spain). At this conference the predominating right of France to political influence in Morocco was formally recognised; but it was agreed that the government of the Sultan should be maintained, and that all countries should have equal trading rights

in Morocco. This was, of course, the very basis of the Franco-British agreement. On the other hand, it negatived the plan of gradual annexation which France certainly entertained. Nevertheless Germany regarded the result of the Algeçiras Conference as a diplomatic defeat, because she had failed to preserve the chance of securing Morocco for herself. On point after point she had been defeated by the votes of the other powers, even her own ally, Italy, deserting her.

But the German intervention had its effect. The Sultan had refused the French scheme of reform. The elements of disorder in Morocco were encouraged to believe that they had the protection of Germany, and the activity of German agents strengthened this belief. The anarchy grew steadily worse. In 1907 Sir Harry Maclean was captured by a brigand chief, and the British government had to pay £20,000 ransom for his release. In the same year a number of European workmen engaged on harbour works at Casablanca were murdered by tribesmen; and the French sent a force which had a year's fighting before it reduced the district to order. In 1911 the Sultan was besieged in his capital (where there were a number of European residents) by insurgent tribesmen, and was persuaded to invite the French to send an army to his relief. There were some who believed that the Sultan was in no real danger, and that France was utilising an excuse to make a fresh attempt at control over Morocco.

Germany took this view. She saw in the episode an opportunity of reopening the whole question. Morocco was no longer 'independent.' The agreement of Algeçiras was dead. Therefore she resumed her right to put forward what claims she pleased in Morocco. Suddenly her gunboat, the *Panther*, appeared off Agadir. It was meant as an assertion that Germany had as much right to intervene in Morocco as France. And it was accompanied by a demand that if France wanted to be left free in Morocco, she must buy the approval of Germany. The settlement of Morocco was to be a question solely between France and Germany. The Entente of 1904, the agreement of 1906, the Moroccan interests of Britain (much more important than those of Germany), and the interests of the other powers of the Algeçiras Conference, were to count for nothing. Germany's voice must be the determining factor. But Germany was willing to be bought off by concessions of French territory elsewhere—provided that Britain was not allowed to have anything to say: provided, that is, that the agreement of 1904 was scrapped. This was a not too subtle way of trying to drive a wedge between two friendly powers. It did not succeed. Britain insisted upon being consulted. There was for a time a real danger of war. In the end peace was maintained by the cession by France of considerable areas in the Congo as the price of Germany's abandonment of her claims in Morocco. But Morocco was left under a definite French pro-

tectorate; and the German hope of finding an outlet in this direction had been finally defeated.

It is probable that Germany never seriously meant to go to war for the sake of Morocco, though war seemed perilously near both in 1906 and in 1911. But the Moroccan episode had a profound influence in quickening the pace of the current as it swirled towards the cataract. On the one hand, the blustering and dictatorial methods which Germany thought fit to adopt drove the rival powers into closer association, and made them feel that in her existing temper it was extraordinarily difficult to maintain friendly relations with her. On the other hand, the diplomatic defeats of 1906 and 1911 (for so they were regarded) added strength to the war-party in Germany itself. It seemed plain that the banded world-powers stood in the way of Germany's advance at every point. The moral was drawn that war was the only way out: a fresh appeal to the sword, whereby every earlier stage in advance had been won, must be made before it was too late.

Until the very eve of war there were important elements in the German government, including the Chancellor and (in his more sober moods) the Kaiser, who regarded the idea of war with aversion, and hoped that Germany might get her way by negotiation, and by sowing dissension among her rivals. It is probable that a majority in the Reichstag would have given its support to this party, had the Reichstag ever been admitted to

the arcana of foreign politics. But the peace-party were hampered by the fact that they also shared a view of Germany's rights and claims which could scarcely have been satisfied without war. They did not want war ; but they set before themselves aims which almost necessitated war. And there was always a formidable party which had no patience with these hesitations, and was eager to draw the sabre. It included the men of the General Staff, backed by the numerous Pan-German societies and newspapers. The issue of the Morocco question in 1911 played into the hands of the men of violence ; and from this moment began the last strenuous burst of military preparation which preceded the war. In 1911 was passed the first of a series of Army Acts for the increase of the already immense German Army, and still more for the provision of vast equipment and the scientific apparatus of destruction ; two further Acts for the same purpose followed in 1912 and in 1913. In 1911 also was published General Bernhardi's famous book, which defined and described the course of future action, and the aim which Germany must henceforth pursue with all her strength : *Weltmacht oder Niedergang*, world-power or downfall.

VI

It is needless to dwell in detail upon the events in the Balkans, which were the second main source of trouble during these distressful years,

and on three occasions (in 1908-9, 1912, and 1913) brought Europe within measurable distance of war: we have already discussed them in their bearing upon German aspirations after world-power. The attitude of Germany in 1908, when she gave whole-hearted support to the quite illegitimate annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria in defiance of treaty-rights, coming as it did between the first and the second Moroccan crises, convinced the Entente Powers that the Central Powers were prepared to ride roughshod over all resistance in the pursuit of their ambitions, and that this made war almost inevitable. It contributed to make their diplomatic co-operation more intimate, and helped to confirm Germany in the belief that they were bent upon blocking every path of advance which she desired to follow. In 1908 the Central Powers got their way by blustering. But this was only because Russia was still suffering from the effects of the Japanese war and the revolution which followed it, and had to swallow her wrath. This state of things would not last: Russia set herself to strengthen her military organisation in preparation for the coming clash. She was humiliated by the feeling that she had deserted the little Slav state of Serbia, where the annexation of Serb populations by Austria had aroused a passion of nationalist resentment. But this Serbian movement also convinced Austria, and perhaps Germany, that Serbia was dangerous: dangerous to Austria because of the nationalist sentiment to which she

could appeal in the Austrian provinces that have been united with her since the war; dangerous also to the great Berlin-Bagdad project, since she controlled the main railways. Austria contemplated an attack upon her in 1909, and prepared forged documents to justify the onslaught. Germany put a veto upon this act; the peace-party still had the upper hand at Berlin. But already the causes which made Serbia the starting-point of the Great War were at work.

The events of 1912 and 1913, coming as they did upon the heels of defeat in Morocco and after the Italian seizure of Tripoli had shaken the loyalty of the Turks, had still more important effects. The formation and triumph of the Balkan League and the collapse of Turkey endangered the great Berlin-Bagdad project, now Germany's chief hope; behind the Balkan League Germany suspected that the influence of Russia was at work. And although the break-up of the League in 1913 improved the outlook, the defeat of Bulgaria left Serbia in a stronger position than ever. In 1912 and again in 1913 Austria projected onslaughts upon Serbia, as in 1909. She was still held in restraint by Germany; but perhaps now the reason was that the time was not ripe, for there was no restraining hand when the next occasion offered in 1914. The time was not ripe because since 1911 Germany had been engaged, as we have seen, upon colossal military preparations, which were not yet complete. The war-party was winning the upper hand, and was getting ready

for a possible war against the opposing powers. If such a war would come, the British navy would have to be dealt with. For that purpose the Kiel Canal had to be deepened in order that battleships might pass freely and safely between the North Sea and the Baltic. The Canal was not ready until June 1914—just a month before Germany at last gave to Austria a free hand to deal with Serbia.

Meanwhile the rival powers were engaged in equally strenuous preparation. Russia, aided by loans from France, was building strategic railways to facilitate the transport of armies towards the German frontier. They were not ready when the war began; but the German strategic railways on the Belgian border were ready. France imposed upon the whole of her manhood the obligation of serving in the army for three instead of two years. Even Belgium hastily adopted compulsory military service in 1913. Britain had meanwhile reorganised her small professional army, created a Territorial Force, and begun the training of a large officer-class in all the universities and public schools. She did not attempt to introduce compulsory service: had she done so, she would probably have precipitated the war.

Europe was obviously nearing the cataract. Quite apart from anything that might happen in 1914, it was plain that the European situation, and in particular Germany's failure to obtain satisfaction for her ambitions of world-power, had made the menace of war extraordinarily imminent.

VII

But it may well be asked, and the future historian will certainly ask, whether nothing had been done to reduce the inflammation, whether no attempt had been made to satisfy Germany's legitimate aspirations. When all is said that can be said about the hectoring methods of German diplomacy and her lack of respect for the sentiments and ambitions of other powers, it remains true that she had a grievance: she had obtained a share of the non-European world wholly disproportionate to her status among nations; and now that 'world-power' was recognised as the test of greatness among states, it was natural that she should desire it. It may be that this new standard of greatness was a false and vicious one; but this answer could scarcely be given by the three empires which had taken the lion's share in the partition of the world, and which were now, as Germany believed, combining to debar her from every opportunity of rectifying the balance.

There is no evidence that this broad issue was ever seriously discussed by the Entente Powers. Had it been raised, their natural reaction would have been to assume that any addition to the power of Germany would only increase the dangers of war, and encourage her in her dictatorial methods.

It can, however, be claimed that Britain did her best to reduce the inflammation of armaments, to remove Germany's apprehensions that she was

encircled by a ring of enemies, and to explore the possibility of finding some means of satisfying her legitimate aspirations without turning the world upside down. From 1906 onwards she had made repeated attempts to persuade Germany to accept a mutual disarmament or retardation of naval construction. All these advances were met by a contemptuous negative ; they were perhaps taken as signs of weakness. In 1912, when the war-cloud was beginning to be black, Britain made a more definite advance. The German newspapers were full of talk about the British policy of 'encircling' Germany in order to attack and destroy her, which they attributed mainly to Sir Edward Grey. It was a manifest absurdity, since the Franco-Russian alliance was formed in 1891, at a time when Britain was on bad terms with both France and Russia, and the agreements later made with these two countries were wholly devoted to removing old causes of dispute. But the German people obviously believed it, and the steady diplomatic co-operation of the Entente Powers gave some apparent justification for the belief. Perhaps the German government also believed it ? Britain resolved to remove this apprehension. Accordingly in 1912 Lord Haldane was sent to Germany with a formal and definite statement, authorised by the Cabinet, to the effect that Britain had made no alliance or understanding which was aimed against Germany, and had no intention of doing so. That being so, since Germany need have no fear of an attack

from Britain, why should not the two powers agree to reduce their naval expenditure? The German reply was that to stop the naval programme was impossible, but that construction might be *delayed*, on one condition—that both powers should sign a formal agreement drawn up by Germany. Each power was to pledge itself to absolute neutrality in any European war in which the other was engaged. Each power was to undertake to make no new alliances. But this agreement was not to affect existing alliances or the duties arising under them. This proposal was an obvious trap, and the German ministers who proposed it must have had the poorest opinion of the intelligence of English statesmen if they thought it was likely to be accepted. For it left Germany, in conjunction with Austria, free to attack France and Russia. It left the formidable Triple Alliance unimpaired. But it tied the hands of Britain, who had no existing European alliances, enforced neutrality upon her in such a war, and compelled her to look on idly and wait her turn. In the recent war, if such an agreement had been concluded, Germany could have pleaded that she was bound to take part by the terms of her alliance with Austria, who began it; but Britain would have been compelled to stand aloof. The attempt to reassure Germany was thus a failure.

It was yet more creditable to the British government of these years that, in spite of the fevered and embittered feeling of the time, they made an

honest endeavour, so far as lay in their power, to find the means of satisfying reasonable German aspirations. They agreed to the Bagdad railway project, upon which so much hung, in spite of the fact that the growth of German power in that region might be regarded as a menace to India. They negotiated a Colonial Treaty, whereby it was proposed to assure to Germany rights of pre-emption over Portuguese and other territories in Africa should the present possessors of these lands be willing to dispose of them. This treaty was ready for confirmation in June 1914. Its recognition of German claims was so frank that the German colonial enthusiast, Paul Rohrbach, admitted when he saw it that it met every reasonable demand. The only reason why it was not signed was that the German government refused to allow it to be made public, and Sir Edward Grey refused to sign any treaty which had not been approved by Parliament. Perhaps in any case such a treaty, necessarily hypothetical in its provisions, would not have satisfied the aspirations of Germany. But in June 1914 it came too late. The militarists were already in the saddle; the peace-party in Germany had been overthrown.

One last attempt the British government made in the frenzied days of negotiation which preceded the war. Sir Edward Grey had begged the German government to make *any* proposal which would make for peace, and promised his support beforehand; he had received no reply. He had undertaken that if Germany made any reasonable

proposal, and France or Russia objected, he would have nothing further to do with France or Russia. Still there was no reply. Imagining that Germany might still be haunted by what Bismarck called 'the nightmare of coalition,' and might be rushing into war now because she feared a war in the future under more unfavourable conditions, he had pledged himself, if Germany would only say the word which would secure the peace, to use every effort to bring about a general understanding among the Great Powers which would banish all fears of an anti-German combination. It was of no use. The reply was a suggestion that Britain should bind herself to neutrality on terms which would have allowed Germany to attack France through Belgium (which Britain and Germany were alike bound by treaty to defend), and, after the anticipated victory over France, to annex the whole of the French colonial empire. These were conditions which Britain could not have accepted without the most profound dishonour. And if she had, for the sake of momentary peace, thus disgraced and humiliated herself, she would have known, as she looked on helplessly at the ruin of her friends, that her own turn must soon come.

The vaulting ambitions of Germany, and her visions of world-power, had thus forced upon the world a desperate struggle in which the destinies of the whole globe were involved, as in no other war that had ever been fought in history.

THE
WORLD EMPIRES
IN 1900-1914.
British
French
German
American
Russian
GEORGE PHILIP & SON LTD

X

THE WORLD-WAR AND ITS RELATION TO THE EXPANSION OF EUROPE

I

If we have been right in the analysis of causes and events contained in the last chapter, the dreadful conflict of 1914-18, which drew almost the whole world into its vortex, and nearly brought about the downfall of civilisation, was ultimately due to the unsatisfied ambitions of a single power. But it was also, in a real sense, the culmination of that long process, extending over four centuries, whereby European civilisation had acquired the mastery of the world; and in the glare of the great conflagration the results of this process, and the problems which it had created, stood forth in high relief.

Because the war was in some sense the outcome of the whole European imperialist movement, there are some who insist that we ought not to lay the blame upon Germany. The ambitions of Germany, though they were more ruthless and unflinching, were after all of a piece with the ambitions of all the imperialist powers which have thrown themselves into the race for extra-European possessions. Should they not all share the blame? Does not the responsibility for this *débâcle* of civilisation

rest upon the whole frenzy of imperialism which has brought the greater part of the non-European world under the domination of Europe ? If the European powers had abstained from this fierce competition, if they had been content to leave the non-European world to determine its own fate, there need, on this view, have been no World-War.

There is a sense in which these statements are the most obvious of platitudes ; but they do not help us to a sane judgment upon a great historical process which has shaped and is shaping the destinies of humanity. Let us state the point a little differently. If, in order to avoid the risks of conflict, the densely populated and progressive countries of Europe had been content to keep all their children within their own borders, and had let them die off for lack of the means of sustenance when almost empty lands, peopled only by scattered savages, lay waiting to be occupied, or, at most, had allowed their surplus manhood to find its own way into these empty lands, without the indispensable support and direction which only organised government can give—if, for the same reason, the inexhaustible enterprise of Western industry had been content to do without the raw materials which only the undeveloped countries could yield in sufficient abundance, or had been left free to exploit these resources without the supervision and control which even a bad government can give—if, in short, Europe had deliberately restrained herself from all direct contact, of a political kind, with the non-European world, of

a surety there would have been no World-War. But the hypothesis is a preposterous one ; and it may be added that while, on this hypothesis, there would have been no World-War, there would also have been no world-unity, such as we see drawing nearer, the outcome of the world-ranging activities of the European peoples.

To lay the blame for the great disaster, not upon those whose action immediately caused it, and who could quite definitely have avoided it had they so willed, but to lay it rather upon a vast process which has been at work for four centuries, is indeed a sort of flaccid and sentimental fatalism, and an abnegation of our responsibility for forming clear moral judgments. It does not help us to understand or to guide wisely the forces by which our destinies are being shaped.

It is true that if Europe had not set herself to conquer the non-European world, and had not thereby brought all humanity within a single political system, there would have been no World-War. It is equally true that if there were no rain, there would be no floods ; but even the dwellers in a flood-devastated land will not find any consolation in such a platitude, or any help in the task of making their homes safe. It is true, again, that the careers of all the conquering and civilising peoples have been often defiled by greed, by cruelty, by needless violence, and that none of the nations is wholly virtuous. It is also true that Germany had been robbed by Fate of the share of the outer world which would naturally have

fallen to her. But neither the defects of other nations nor the bad fortune of Germany can excuse the crime of 1914, the crime of precipitating a World-War which she could have avoided. In spite of the fever of European imperialism and the frictions which it caused, the World-War would not have happened if Germany had been able to display even that moderate degree of restraint and respect for the reasonable claims of others which has not been beyond the reach of other nations.

The World-War was the outcome, but not the necessary outcome, of the process whereby the civilisation of Europe has conquered and unified the globe. Equally it was the outcome, but not the necessary outcome, of the immense labours of scientific research which have placed in the hands of humanity a new mastery over the forces of Nature, and a vastly increased power either for destruction or for well-doing. It is the task of the leaders of humanity in the future so to arrange that we may reap the benefits while avoiding the possible evil consequences of these august and tremendous processes.

II

When the long-awaited storm at length burst, it appeared to half the world to be merely a conflict between the two groups of Great Powers which had been watching one another, and arming against one another, for twenty years; merely the last, though the most terrible, of that long series of Balance-of-Power struggles which had recurred at

intervals during the course of modern history; and at first every nation which could do so held it to be its duty to stand aloof from the war and, if possible, to make profit out of it.

But because the great world-states which had grown up during the nineteenth century were involved, the conflict necessarily took on from the first a world-wide character which sharply differentiated it from every earlier European war. Gradually it became clear that no people on the earth could be indifferent to its issue; and as the desperate fight wore on, one state after another was drawn in, till almost the whole world was engaged.

At the outset it was a war between Germany and Austria on the one hand, and the Triple Entente of Russia, France, and Britain on the other, while the two heroic little states of Belgium and Serbia were involved because they were the victims of the tyranny of Germany in the one case and of Austria in the other. But Germany, Russia, France, and Britain were world-states; and their warfare already involved more than half the land-area of the world, in Asia, Africa, Australasia, America. Faithful to her alliance with Britain, Japan early declared against Germany; and the war was extended to the Far East. Turkey was drawn in on the side of Germany; and the whole of the Near East was involved. Bulgaria presently linked her fortunes with those of Germany, and gave to the Central Powers the advantage of a continuous front. Meanwhile Italy, deserting the Triple

Alliance because she recognised the menace which threatened the world, threw her weight upon the side of the Allies; and ere long Rumania on the east and Portugal on the west committed their fortunes to the same cause, while the accession of Greece was only delayed by the German sympathies of her king.

By the time the war had lasted for two years, the greater part of the world had been drawn into the vortex: all Europe, save a few trembling neutrals; all Asia, save Persia, China, and Siam; all Australasia and the isles of the Pacific; all Africa except Abyssinia and the negligible dominions of Spain. Only the Americas stood aloof; and even in the Americas Canada, the British and French West Indies, Guiana, and the Falklands were engaged. The flames of war wrapped the world round.

Yet even this was not enough. Thanks to her long preparation, her mastery of the arts of war, and the compact and defensible position of her own and her allies' territories, Germany was still more than holding her own against the growing numbers and the vast resources of her enemies. At the end of 1916 she still seemed to be unconquerable. But according to the testimony of her military dictator, Ludendorff, she was at that date reduced to a critical condition. She resorted to the desperate remedy of unrestricted submarine warfare as her only hope of safety. And that brought in the United States, followed by most of the remaining neutrals who lay beyond the reach of her ruthless

arm. It was as if Destiny had decreed that the whole world must be compelled to engage in a common effort, in order that it might learn that the welfare of each depended upon the welfare of all. Every people had to be taught that it had now become impossible for any state to wash its hands of responsibility for the common weal, or to disentangle itself from the network of relationships which now overspread the globe.

When the United States entered the fray in 1917, after standing aloof during two and a half years, the universal character of the struggle, and its momentous significance in the history of humanity, stood clearly revealed. Of all the nations in the world the United States was the most completely dominated by a tradition of aloofness from international concerns; of all nations she could most safely adopt this attitude. When this powerful tradition was broken down, and when even America was driven to realise that the New World cannot be severed from the Old, that no nation can shake off its share of responsibility for the world's welfare, and that we are all now unalterably one another's keepers, a great moment in human history was reached. Its significance was underlined when the entry of the United States was followed by the entry of China and Siam, of Brazil and a group of South and Central American Republics. They could do little or nothing to influence the course of the war. But their action showed that the world had become a single political unit.

III

This, indeed, amid all its ugliness and misery, was the outstanding lesson of the Great War: that it demonstrated in an unmistakable way how far the world had been brought, by the conquering activities of Europe, on the road towards unity; and how complete had become the interdependence of all peoples.

The long series of wars which had marked the stages in the expansion of Europe had undergone a gradual widening of range, a gradual increase in the number of lands and peoples whose fortunes these wars showed to be intertwined with one another. The wars of Louis XIV. were fought not in Europe alone, but in North America and the West Indies; but they were still waged almost wholly by the European peoples. The Seven Years' War involved Red Indian tribes in America and ruling princes in India; but the significance of these conflicts for themselves was as yet scarcely perceived by these peoples, and they did not see that their fate was now linked with that of Europe. The Napoleonic War involved the peoples of North and South America, it changed the history of South Africa, it brought Egypt and Syria into European politics, it caused conflicts in Java and the Straits of Malacca, it drew into its vortex the great powers of India, and almost brought about the political unification of that vast land. The significance of these events could not be wholly missed; and the nineteenth century opened with

a striking demonstration of the interdependence of Europe and the non-European world, especially in the gigantic trade struggle which Napoleon waged against Britain. But even so, the moral was not yet driven home: the major part of the world's population probably never heard of the Napoleonic War, and was not consciously influenced by its reactions. Then came the rapid development of the nineteenth century, which brought the whole world under the influence of Europe; and the Great War, when it came, directly and obviously affected every corner of the earth. This is, perhaps, the aspect of the Great War upon which future historians will especially dwell. It was the first event in human history in which the whole of humanity was directly and consciously concerned; in which every race and tribe of men knew, however dimly, that the fortunes of all were alike at stake.

Though the fiercest paroxysms of fighting were concentrated in Europe, every continent and every sea was the scene either of actual fighting, or of strenuous labours to provide the materials of war. In Africa there were set campaigns in Cape Colony and German South-West, in the Cameroons and the Congo, in Togoland, in East Africa; there were movements of tribesmen in Morocco and Tripoli and the Libyan desert; there was fierce fighting on the borders of Egypt. No single tribe in all Africa can have been unaware of the gigantic conflict, or have failed to understand that its own fortunes were involved. Every part of Asia was directly affected. Mesopotamia was traversed

by armies of white men for the first time since Alexander the Great; Palestine and Syria saw great campaigns on a far vaster scale than the Crusades. All the tribes of Arabia were in the field, as never since the time of the Prophet's immediate successors. All the peoples of Asia Minor were turned to the business of war. The mountains of Armenia witnessed the final tragedy of an ancient race. Persia was turned upside down. India sent out armies to many parts of the world, as never before in her history. Over the limitless expanse of Siberia every man and every beast of burden was drawn into the service of the war. China saw armies of Japanese and Indians and Englishmen besetting the fortress of Kiao-chau. The Indian Ocean was the scene of commerce-raids and bombardments. The Pacific was scoured by hostile fleets, and conquering forces landed in Samoa and New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago. All the young manhood of Australia and New Zealand was in the fighting lines. Even the Americas could not hold aloof. Naval battles were fought off Coronel and the Falkland Islands, and a fugitive German vessel was hunted to its fate on the shores of Robinson Crusoe's desert isle. Ships were sunk off the very harbour of New York. And all the factories and all the ranches of North and South America found occupation in supplying the armies with food and munitions. From Kamschatka to Peru, from Nova Zembla to the Falklands, the whole world was drawn into the vortex; and those who felt the strain in no other way, felt it in the

universal rise of prices and the shortage of the products of European mills and factories which had insensibly become necessaries during the previous half century.

But the most poignant evidence of the unity-in-disunity which had now been brought to the world was given by those grim, endless fighting-lines which were drawn across Europe from the Straits of Dover to Gallipoli, and from the Baltic to the Black Sea. When the knighthood of Europe gathered at Nicomedia for the First Crusade, Fulcher of Chartres rose to an almost lyric fervour as he catalogued the assembled peoples whose confluence proved the unity of Christendom. When Napoleon collected his hosts for the Moscow campaign, the world was dazzled by the multitude of peoples whom he had brought under a single dominion. But these were trifling assemblages in comparison with the legions who flocked from every corner of the earth to fight the world's battle on the historic soil of Europe. On the one hand were Germans, Austrians, Magyars, Rumans, Czechs, Poles, Bulgars, Turks, and Arabs, manning the lines of a vast beleaguered fortress. On the other hand, holding on with improvised and at first ill-equipped forces against the sallies of the besieged, were innumerable hosts of Britons, Frenchmen, Belgians, Italians, Russians, Portuguese, Serbs, Greeks, Rumanians. These were European peoples, defending their homes. But beside them stood Canadians, Australians, South Africans, New Zealanders, Newfoundlanders, and, in the end, also

Americans, who had crossed thousands of miles of ocean to spend their lives in a cause which was only theirs because it was the cause of the whole world. Yet these were, after all, the sons of Europe. But what miracle had brought into the same battle-line Sikhs and Dogras from the hot plains of the Punjab, Mahrattas from the uplands of the Deccan, Rajputs from the oases of the Indian desert, Gurkhas from the high Himalayas, gallant Maoris from remote New Zealand, Sudanese from the upper waters of the Nile, dusky Berbers from the mountains of Atlas, black warriors from Senegal, high-cheeked Mongols from Annam and Cambodia; while behind the lines, busy upon necessary services, were armies of Chinamen, negroes of many races, Burmans and Assamese from the remote East? It was, no doubt, a terrible thing that all these peoples should be gathered together for purposes of destruction. But at least they were gathered together for a common purpose, men of every race and tongue, from all the continents and islands of the globe. The interdependence of the whole world had been established; the Great War had demonstrated it, and could not undo it.

It was only by degrees that most of the peoples realised the universal character of the war. But the most significant thing in the early stages was the swiftness with which this realisation was reached by the peoples of the British Commonwealth, that strange and loose compost of diverse peoples which, just because it girdles the world and

yet is linked with Europe through its common centre, is more in touch with world-movements than other human societies. The self-governing members of this Commonwealth were under no compulsion to take part in the conflict; if they had wished to stand aloof, they could have done so, and if we may judge by Bernhardi's anticipations, Germany had calculated upon their doing so. But from the first moment of the war they grasped its significance, and gave all their strength, without exception and without reserve. 'When England is at war, Canada is at war'; 'To the last man and the last shilling Australia will support the cause of the Empire'; these were proclamations, by free societies far removed from the controversies of Europe, to which history affords no parallel; and deeds more than made good these brave words, not in Canada and Australia only, but in all the self-governing dominions. Loyalty to the ideal of a free commonwealth was no doubt the first propelling motive in this superb rally of free peoples. But the Commonwealth had taught them the meaning of mutual responsibility; they had a real comprehension of the significance of a great moment in the world's history. Even more striking was the response of the princes and peoples of India, whom no common ancestry bound to the common cause. Not under any compulsion, but willingly, the princes lavished gifts and offers of service; while hundreds of thousands of fighting men, especially from the north-west, flocked to enlist voluntarily for service in remote countries of

which their fathers had never even heard. In like manner the princes of Malaysia, the peoples of Pacific isles, and the chieftains of primitive African tribes hastened to assert their loyalty, to send such gifts as they could contrive, and to offer their personal service for a cause which they knew dimly to be their own cause and the world's. When every discount that can be suggested has been made, here was a demonstration of cohesion and of common sympathies between peoples whose history and traditions had very little in common, the like of which had never been seen before in human history.

It was the structure and tradition of the British Commonwealth which made possible this impressive and spontaneous co-operation. If it had failed to do so—if the invisible links that bound together the members of this great partnership of peoples had proved less strong—there can be scarcely a doubt that a German victory would have come about in the first year of the war, and the history of the world would have been changed. It was the sense of unity among widely varying peoples scattered over the globe which the free structure of the Commonwealth created that saved civilisation from wreck, and gave time for the rest of the world to mobilise its forces. Had circumstances and tradition made it possible for the other civilised peoples outside Europe to grasp the situation as swiftly as it was grasped by the members of the British Commonwealth, the length of the war would have been halved, millions of precious lives would

have been saved, and the economic collapse which now afflicts us would have been averted. Lacking the reminder of mutual responsibility which the structure of the British Commonwealth gave to its members, America and the other extra-European peoples were able for a long time to cherish the notion that they could stand aloof, and that, in a world now unalterably one, it was still possible for them to live ' for themselves alone.' In September 1918 President Wilson told the world that America had entered the conflict at the right moment, when the issues had become plain. That, no doubt, was true for America: it had taken two and a half years to make the issues plain to her citizens. But they were identically the same issues whose universal and momentous importance had been instantaneously grasped by Canada and Australia in August 1914. Had America and Brazil, Chile and the Argentine, China and Siam, been linked in any formal fellowship which would have reminded them of the now unmistakable interdependence of all peoples, to them also the issues would have been plain in August 1914; and the world would have been saved from dreadful woes. That is one of the morals of the great conflict. It is not enough that the world has in fact become one, so that what hurts one member hurts all; it is necessary that there should be a tangible reminder of this mutual dependence and the responsibilities which arise from it, such as the structure of the British Commonwealth provided for its members.

IV

The war inevitably imposed upon all the world-powers a very severe tension; and when we remember how recently a great part—in some cases almost the whole—of their territory had been acquired, the wonder is that they did not break up under the strain. Yet on the whole they withstood it with surprising success, and there was curiously little unrest or revolt among their subjects.

The most remarkable instance of resisting power was that afforded by the British Commonwealth, the largest and the most loosely organised of all the world-states. Because of this laxity of organisation, and the absence of any strong and masterful authority at headquarters, Germany seems to have anticipated that the resources of the Empire would not be available for the purposes of war; she had calculated upon the outbreak of formidable revolts in India, Egypt, and South Africa, and she did her best to stimulate such revolts; she had hoped that the entry of Turkey into the war would stir the Mahomedan subjects of the British Empire into rebellion. All these anticipations were disappointed; and the zeal and devotion of every part of the Commonwealth were almost as surprising to the friends of Britain as to her enemies. But the most impressive demonstration of the strength of the Commonwealth was afforded by just those members upon whose discontents Germany had most securely counted. In South Africa the Dutch

had been at war with Britain only a dozen years before the Great War began ; the government was actually in the hands of the general who had commanded the Boer forces in the field ; and from the neighbouring territory of German South-West Africa intrigues could be carried on, and help could be given to any revolt. Thanks to these circumstances, a forlorn rising was attempted by a group of Dutch extremists. But they were swiftly subdued by their fellow-Dutchmen, under the command of the gallant Botha ; after which Dutchmen and Englishmen, in friendly rivalry, took an equal share in the brilliant campaign by which South-West Africa was conquered ; and then forces were despatched from South Africa to help in the conquest of German East Africa under another Boer general, Smuts, and to play a gallant part in the French campaigns. There could not have been a more triumphant vindication of the principle on which the British Commonwealth has been built, that partnership in freedom is the surest foundation of unity. Not less striking was the steady loyalty of India, despite the fact that a vigorous agitation for enlarged political privileges had been going on before the war, and continued with increased intensity during its course. Even the enmity of the Sultan, the head of the Mahomedan faith, did not affect the loyalty of the Indian Mahomedans ; in Mesopotamia, in Palestine, and in Egypt they fought without hesitation against the Turkish armies. There was, indeed, a mutiny among some Indian troops at Singapore ; there

was an anarchist movement in Bengal, to which Germany tried in vain to send arms and money; there was a threatening of more serious trouble in the Punjab. But these were small affairs. They did not affect the steady loyalty of India as a whole, or interfere with the growing volume of recruiting, though at some moments the country was almost denuded of British troops. Nor was there, during the course of the war, any serious trouble in Egypt, though the political agitation which was to become vehement after the peace was already at work. And in every other part of the vast British Empire there was no revolt, there was not even indifference; there was, as we have already seen, the most spontaneous outburst of loyalty, zeal, and sacrifice.

Equally was this the case in the other great empires. In all the huge African territories of France there was no marked unrest save in distressful Morocco, which had only been brought under control on the very eve of the war; and this in spite of the fact that there was a heavy drain upon the manhood of the more warlike French provinces. When Belgium was almost wholly overrun by the Germans, her Congolese subjects, in spite of all they had suffered under the Leopoldine régime, made no attempt to throw off her control, but provided the resources for an attack on German East Africa. The Italians had some trouble in Tripoli; but when it is remembered that Tripoli had only been conquered in 1911, and that smouldering revolt had lasted for some time after

the conquest, the wonder is that it did not flame out on the largest scale. In spite of the opportunities for revolt which the war obviously presented, the outstanding fact is that the subjects of these recently acquired empires abstained from any attempt to throw off their supremacy, but seem rather to have dreaded the possibility of confusion which would have followed their fall.

What is most remarkable is that this applies equally to the German dominions. It is true that Samoa and German New Guinea, Togoland and the Cameroons, were conquered without much difficulty, and that even South-West Africa, where much more elaborate preparations had been made, was, thanks to the skill of Botha, relatively quickly overrun ; true also that in these colonies, and even in East Africa, where the resistance was much more prolonged, the change of masters was very easily accepted, and in some cases welcomed, by the native subjects. But in no case does there appear to have been any powerful spontaneous movement of revolt among the natives while in East Africa Lettow-Vorbeck, the brilliant leader of the German resistance, got staunch support from his gallant Askari.

In short, the European empires showed far greater stability than could have been expected in view of the mode in which they had been acquired. May we not conclude that, on the whole, the order and peace which their establishment had brought, and the cessation of the unending anarchy of barbarism, were already recognised as a boon ? And

is it not reasonable to infer that the high-handedness and cruelty by which they had sometimes been defiled, especially in the German colonies, was not as intensely resented by peoples accustomed to violence as European critics assumed ? It would seem that, among the backward races, whatever might be the case among the more civilised peoples of India and Egypt, there was no passion for ' self-determination '; otherwise the opportunity for revolt presented by the war would not have been neglected. And even in the lands where the ideals of self-government were fermenting, the preservation of the world-power under whose protection these ideals could alone be realised was felt to be essential. In truth, the stability of most of the world-states amid the storm of war went to prove that these empires, whatever their defects, had in them elements of strength and utility which made them a necessary means for the development of a world-order.

But there was one of the world-states which failed to stand the strain of war ; and the contrast between its fate and that of its fellows is full of instruction. What is most significant is that it was that one of the world-states which, next to the United States, possessed the greatest territorial unity, and the greatest apparent racial homogeneity —the Russian Empire. Even here the collapse did not result from any revolt among the subject-peoples, but was due to the defects of the central government : it did not originate in Turkestan or Caucasia, but in Petrograd. The breakdown was

due, in the first place, to the fact that the Russian government had been an almost unqualified tyranny, under which neither just and equal law nor political liberty existed; and in the second place to the fact that the Russian people, backward and uneducated, inexperienced in politics and incapable of realising the horrors of anarchy, fell an easy prey to windy formulae. Though it was but a bare bone of social well-being that they had possessed, they could not understand that the shadow for which they dropped the bone was even less nutritious. So complete was the collapse that, for a time, the Russian Empire broke into warring fragments, which have only been partially rejoined under the pressure of a tyranny yet more brutal than that which it replaced. Had Russia been a more highly organised society, comparable with the industrial societies of the West, its collapse would have been even more disastrous, and would have led to yet more hideous destruction of life by starvation.

The visionary fanatics whose doctrinaire theories led to this utter *débâcle* began their revolution with a denunciation of imperialism as the child of capitalism and (with its parent) the source of every human woe. They have held their own, or avoided utter ruin, partly by pursuing a policy of despotic domination and of foreign adventure more reckless than the imperialism they denounce; and partly by making terms with the very system of capitalist enterprise they set out to overthrow. The Russian revolution has shown once more, what scarcely

needed to be demonstrated, that in any society which is not sufficiently coherent, sufficiently self-conscious, and sufficiently inspired by a sense of common interests, to provide a solid *voluntary* basis for authority, the only hope of holding the society together lies in the creation of a strong authority able to disregard the wavering gusts of an unintelligent public opinion. Most of the societies existing in the world are in this condition: they have neither enough coherence nor enough sense of common interest to provide a voluntary basis for authority. And that is the ultimate justification of the world-states. They provide the means of maintaining a highly-organised social life in large areas of the world where it would otherwise be impossible; and they enable the backward and the progressive peoples to make their appropriate contributions, however imperfectly, to one another's well-being. The dominion of these empires over their subject-peoples is, for the most part, irresponsible; it can be none other. But they have been able to act as real civilising forces because there existed among the ruling peoples an instructed public opinion inspired by a deepening sense of obligation. Russia lacked this preservative under the old régime; she lacks it still under the new. This was why the authority which held together the incoherent masses of the Russian Empire was so weak that it collapsed under the strain which the Western empires survived.

V

But while most of the world-states withstood the actual strain of war better than could have been anticipated, the war stimulated many forces, some old, some new, which tended to weaken their power; and the working of these forces seems to be opening a new era in the relations between Europe and the non-European world.

To begin with, the economic strength upon which the ascendancy of the Western peoples largely rested was very greatly reduced by the strain of war. During four years, instead of creating new wealth and adding to their reserves, Britain, France, Germany, and Italy had been engaged in destroying faster than they could create, in dissipating their accumulated stores, and in mortgaging the resources by means of which future wealth could be created. The mortgages passed into the hands of those peoples which stood aloof from the war, or played but a small part in it; and the economic power thus sacrificed by Europe passed to the United States, which during two and a half years coined wealth from the prodigal outpourings of Europe; or to Japan, which was able largely to free herself from the burdens left by her war with Russia, and to make a swift advance in the volume of her foreign trade; or to the South American Republics; or even, in some measure, to India, which felt in but a slight degree the financial strain of the war. The leadership of the European peoples in the economic sphere, which is

the main foundation of power, had largely been sacrificed; and it even began to seem doubtful whether the European peoples could much longer meet the costly responsibilities of empire.

Yet more important was the psychological effect of the war upon the non-European peoples, and especially upon those of the East. Was it to this carnival of cruelty and destruction that Western civilisation led? Was the civilisation which produced such results entitled to that unquestioning deference which it had hitherto exacted? Might not the lordship which it had established over the world bring in the end more evil than good? Such questions as these the war inevitably challenged; and the mere fact that they were raised weakened the dominion of Europe over the mind of the non-European world, and helped to break the spell which Europe had cast upon the imagination of the East. Already, in the decades preceding the war, Indian thought had begun to revolt against the dominance of the West, and to idealise and glorify the ancient civilisation of India as possessing a spiritual element which Europe seemed to lack. The war intensified this tendency, because it seemed to justify contempt for the 'materialism' of the West. The dogma of Indian spiritual superiority came to be accepted as an axiom by most of the Indian *intelligentsia*; and an attitude of antipathy to the West grew up, which gave great reinforcement to the political movement of Indian nationalism.

This reaction against the dominance of European

ideas and methods also found expression in a revival of self-consciousness and self-assertion in the Islamic world. As a political force, Mahomedanism had been almost negligible during the nineteenth century. Apart from the shrunken and decadent Turkish Empire, almost all the Mahomedan lands had passed under the dominion or influence of the European Powers, and the process seemed to have been accepted without resentment. But the war stirred the Mahomedan world to its depths. Turkey, the last great Moslem power, whose Sultan held the Khalifat or headship of the Moslem faith, was drawn into the war on the side of Germany; and although the motives which brought about this intervention were purely secular, German statecraft did everything in its power to stir into activity the sleeping religious fervour of the Mahomedan peoples, and to revive, in her own interest, the old spirit of the *jihad*. On the other hand, the Arabs were stimulated to revolt against the domination of the Turks under the leadership of the Sherif of Mecca, the ruler of the Holy Places. These events produced bewilderment, excitement, and unrest throughout the world of Islam. It was stirred out of its long quiescence; and when the Turkish power dramatically collapsed before the attacks of the British forces in Palestine and Mesopotamia, and Mahomedans everywhere realised that the last great Moslem power had fallen and lay at the mercy of the Christian powers, there was an immediate repercussion in India, in Egypt and among the fierce

peoples of Central Asia. The mass of Mahomedans had cared little about Turkey while she still stood; but her sudden fall seemed to be the fall of the chief pillar of Islam. The pride of the Moslem was touched. It had always been impossible for him to submit without reluctance to the dominion of the West; but now resignation began to pass into active resentment. Islam is still a very potent force. Even before the war its spiritual vitality had been reviving; its realms cover all northern and eastern Africa, and south-western Asia, while its adherents number one-seventh of the population of India; and any serious unrest in the Islamic world must bring grave troubles to the war-weary powers of Europe.

Finally the ideals of which the Allied Powers proclaimed themselves the defenders, and the catchwords in which these ideals were expressed, had a profound and disturbing influence among many of their subjects. They declared that they were fighting against militarism, against power resting upon mere force: could it not be contended that their own empires had been built and were maintained by force? They announced that they were upholding the right of small or weak nations like Belgium or Serbia to be free: were they not themselves holding many peoples in subjection? They asserted that they were defending the cause of democracy, and the right of all peoples to determine their own destinies: why then did they deny these rights to their subjects? They invented or adopted the vague and sounding term 'self-

determination' as a summary of the ideal after which they were striving: the phrase spread over the world and became a trumpet of unrest, especially in India and in Egypt, whose literate classes were already familiar with the political systems of the West, and had long been agitating for their extension to their own lands.

In all these ways the war caused a ferment of ideas which was not less important for history than the physical upheaval it brought about. Generations will pass before we shall be able to measure the significance of these events. But one striking aspect of this ferment deserves to be noted. Although there were signs of a reaction against the political ascendancy of the West, yet the predominant feature of these agitations was a demand for political rights the very conception of which emanated from Europe. It was a demand for the institutions of political liberty, and for equality; and the clamant assertion of this demand in countries with whose whole social system it was in conflict, was itself a proof that the civilisation of Europe had conquered the world.

VI

During the war, then, and largely because of the war, the new wine of Western ideas was fermenting more actively than ever in the old bottles of the East; and the most astonishing outcome of this was the launching, in the midst of the war, of the most daring and gigantic political experiment which history records: the sudden establishment

of an incomplete, but still real, system of responsible government after the British pattern amid the age-worn social organism of India.

British rule had given to India, for the first time in her long history, political unity and secure peace. For the arbitrary despotisms of the past it had substituted equal laws based upon Indian usages, and the system of government popularly known as 'bureaucracy,' whereunder officials are limited to fixed salaries and forbidden to make profit out of their offices, while they act under stringent rules and have to report all their proceedings to superior officers, under the ultimate control of the British Parliament. It had secured that all funds raised by taxation should be strictly accounted for, and spent exclusively for the benefit of the community, without any deduction of tribute for the mistress-power: the Emperor of India is the only sovereign ever known to history who does not draw one penny from the pockets of his subjects. It had given to the educated classes among the polyglot peoples of India a common medium of communication which had for the first time made mutual understanding and common action possible among them. And it had encouraged the introduction into India of the political theories and ideas of the West, and of the potent engines of the Press and the public meeting whereby they could be discussed and disseminated.

Out of these conditions had arisen, first, a sense of Indian unity which had never existed before, and, secondly, a demand among the Western-educated classes that the machinery of government

should be brought under popular control, as in the countries of the West; and the growth of this demand, which would have been unthinkable in any earlier age of Indian history, was itself a proof of the conquest, not merely of Indian soil, but of the Indian mind, by the West. In response to these demands a substantial element of local self-government had long since been introduced in municipalities and district boards, and a considerable representative element had been added to the Legislative Councils both of India as a whole and of its great provinces. These experiments had not worked well; but their lack of success had been attributed by Indian critics to the inadequacy of the concessions, which were, it was held, insufficient to bring home to the elected bodies a full sense of their responsibility. Educated India was therefore demanding, long before the war, a great extension of self-governing rights: it was claiming to be treated on the same footing as Canada and Australia, as a free member of the British Commonwealth.

The ferment of ideas produced by the war intensified these demands. The claim for full responsible self-government was raised on every hand, in a far more unqualified form than before; and among the more vehement it was accompanied by a growing racial bitterness, by a denial that British rule had brought any benefit to India, and even by assertions that every ill from which India suffered, the poverty of the peasantry, the country's industrial backwardness, the frequency of famine,

the prevalence of plague, were all due to the malignant designs of a ' Satanic ' government bent upon the ruin of the Indian peoples. In some quarters the revolt against European influence went so far as to demand a return to the idealised conditions of primitive India, and the discarding of all the influences of the West.

Yet with all the changes which a century of British rule had brought, the fundamental facts of Indian life remained unaltered. Only a minute percentage of the population had imbibed the culture and ideas of the West: to ninety-nine out of every hundred Indians the fashionable political theories were merely unintelligible—if for no other reason, because their languages did not contain the words through which these theories could be expounded. The Indian continent still presented a greater diversity of human types than any other region of the world ; it remained a living museum of races, from the most primitive and debased to the most advanced. Its people speak no less than 173 languages, as against the 65 which are spoken in Europe ; they are severed from one another by religious differences incomparably deeper than Europe has ever known ; and the fundamental fact in the life of the great majority who belong to Hinduism is the existence of a complex system of rigid castes, which forbids inter-marriage or social relations between the members of different castes, which labels 50,000,000 human beings as ' untouchables,' and which rests upon a belief in the essential and unalterable superiority of the man born in a

higher caste to the man born in a lower caste. Caste is the essence of Hinduism; and it is what has kept Indian society functioning during untold centuries and through innumerable conquests. And caste is inherently incompatible with the very idea of democracy. The two things cannot exist side by side; one must sooner or later destroy the other.

It must be an extraordinarily difficult task to devise a system of self-government suitable for a society many times larger than the biggest self-governing community in the world, and wholly without the social homogeneity which has alone made the working of self-government possible in Western lands. This is not a problem which can readily be solved by formulae, or by the mere imitation of institutions that have sprung from totally different conditions. It is an axiom that no political system can work which is not congruent with the social system of the country in which it is established; and the creation of a system congruent with Indian social conditions is a problem before which the boldest political speculator might well quail.

Yet the creation of such a system was the task which, in response to the ferment created by the war, the British Government felt itself constrained to undertake at the most critical stage in the Great War, when all men's minds were engrossed by immediate problems of life and death. The intention of undertaking this, the most gigantic experiment in history, was casually announced in

Parliament, in answer to a question, on 10th August 1917. It was set on foot during a visit of a few weeks paid by the Secretary of State to India. It is fair to say that the problem, as it was then considered, was not, and could not be, the problem of finding a scheme of government congruent with the Indian social order, but was rather the problem of determining how far a political system which had grown up under the totally different conditions of the West could safely be reproduced in India.

On this basis a highly ingenious scheme was devised, and expounded in a brilliantly written report; and when the war came to an end Britain and India were in effect committed to this huge, complex, and novel experiment. The main feature of the scheme was that the great Indian provinces —each as populous as a European state—were given a large degree of independence of the central government, and endowed with the British system of responsible parliamentary government, qualified only by a reservation of certain important powers (notably foreign policy, military affairs, police, and finance) which were to be retained by officers directly appointed by government and not responsible to the legislature. This system of 'dyarchy' or divided authority was invented by an ingenious political thinker who spent a winter in India. It is a wholly new experiment in government, and only experience can show whether it will work. But the scheme provides for a gradual reduction of the reserved functions, and an increase

of the range covered by ministers responsible to the legislature.

Thus the conditions of the war have brought about an epoch-marking departure in the government of a land which includes one-fifth of the human race. With hot-house speed, it has forced into being an extraordinarily courageous attempt to adapt the institutions of the West to the alien and complex conditions of India—conditions which are in many respects more difficult than those presented by any other human society. If it succeeds, its success will mark perhaps the greatest of all the triumphs of Western ideas in the non-European world.

From the first Indian opposition to the scheme has been loud, and sometimes even hysterical. It turns almost wholly upon the demand that complete and unqualified responsible government should be established at once. The criticism that the new constitution is too exclusively based upon Western models, and does not reflect Indian conditions, has scarcely been heard. And this is highly significant. For it means that even in the circles where antipathy to the West is most pungent, the ideas of the West have conquered. No practicable alternative is ever suggested to the political machinery which came from the West. No doubt seems to be entertained that India both can and ought to adapt herself to the demands of this Western mechanism. It occurs, apparently, to nobody to reflect that either the system of representative democracy must break down, or it

must bring about, perhaps after painful dislocations, a complete transformation of the time-honoured social structure of India. The West has conquered. It has forced India to think politically; and even when she fancies she is repudiating Western influence, India can think politically only along Western lines.

VII

Plainly, then, the Great War was the culmination of that vast historical process whereby the civilisation of Europe has won the domination of the world. It proved that this process had made the world economically and politically one, and demonstrated the interdependence and the mutual responsibility of all peoples. It was the first event in human history in which every tribe and people of the earth was manifestly and consciously concerned. It tested as by fire the strength of the great world-states grouped round European nations, by which this process had been achieved, and showed that they were much more stable fabrics than could have been anticipated, and that they aroused no antipathy among the masses of their subjects. It proved that the characteristic political conceptions of Europe, the belief in law and in liberty resting on law, had taken root, under the aegis of these empires, in the non-European world, and had stimulated demands which could find no satisfaction save in European political forms. It showed that even those who were tempted to challenge the ascendancy of Europe

could not escape from the dominion of European ideas. And on the basis of these now almost universally accepted principles, it challenged the statesmanship of the world to build upon the foundations already laid the structure of a new and better world-order.

The magnitude of this opportunity and responsibility could not but be felt by thinking men as the desperate struggle proceeded. In an early edition of this book, published in the summer of 1917, an attempt was made to analyse the problem as it then presented itself. It is perhaps worth while to revive the outlook of that grim but noble time, and to keep it in mind when we review, as we shall do in the next chapter, the settlement that was afterwards made, and the problems which it has left. For that reason there need be no apology for reproducing here a few pages from the anxious speculations of 1917.

'We are too prone, when we think of the problems of the future peace, to fix our attention almost wholly upon Europe, and, if we think of the non-European world at all, to assume either that the problem is merely one of power, or that the principles which will guide us in the settlement of Europe can be equally applied outside of Europe. Both of these assumptions are dangerous, because both disregard the teachings of the past which we have been surveying.

'If, on the one hand, we are content to regard the problem as merely one of power, and to divide out the non-European world among the victors as the

spoils of victory, we shall indeed have been conquered by the very spirit which we are fighting; we shall have become converts to the German Doctrine of Power, which has brought upon us all these ills, and may bring yet more appalling evils in the future. The world will emerge divided among a group of vast empires which will overshadow the lesser states. These empires will continue to regard one another with fear and suspicion, and to look upon their subject-peoples merely as providing the implements for a war of destruction, to be waged by cut-throat commercial rivalry in time of peace, and by man-power and machine-power in war. If that should be the result of all our agonies, the burden which must be laid upon the peoples of these empires, and the intolerable anticipation of what is to come, will make their yoke seem indeed a heavy one; will probably bring about their disintegration; and will end that ascendancy of Western civilisation over the world which the last four centuries have established. And justly; since Western civilisation will thus be made to stand not for justice and liberty, but for injustice and oppression. Such must be the inevitable result of any settlement of the non-European world which is guided merely by the ambitions of a few rival states and the Doctrine of Power.

'On the other hand, we are urged by enthusiasts for liberty, especially in Russia, to believe that imperialism as such is the enemy; that we must put an end for ever to all dominion exercised by

one people over another; and that outside of Europe as within it we must trust to the same principles for the hope of future peace—the principles of national freedom and self-government—and leave all peoples everywhere to control freely their own destinies. But this is a misreading of the facts as fatal as the other. It disregards the value of the work that has been done in the extension of European civilisation to the rest of the world by the imperial activities of the European peoples. It fails to recognise that until Europe began to conquer the world neither rational law nor political liberty had ever in any real sense existed in the outer world, and that their dominion is even now far from assured, but depends for its maintenance upon the continued tutelage of the European peoples. It fails to realise that the economic demands of the modern world necessitate the maintenance of civilised administration after the Western pattern, and that this can only be assured, in large regions of the earth, by means of the political control of European peoples. Above all this view does not grasp the essential fact that the idea of nationhood and the idea of self-government are both modern ideas, which have had their origin in Europe, and which can only be realised among peoples of a high political development; that the sense of nationhood is but slowly created, and must not be arbitrarily defined in terms of race or language; and that the capacity for self-government is only formed by a long process of training, and has never existed except among peoples who

were unified by a strongly felt community of sentiment, and had acquired the habit and instinct of loyalty to the law. Assuredly it is the duty of Europe and America to extend these fruitful conceptions to the regions which have passed under their influence. But the process must be a very slow one, and it can only be achieved under tutelage. It is the control of the European peoples over the non-European world which has turned the world into an economic unit, brought it within a single political system, and opened to us the possibility of making a world-order such as the most daring dreamers of the past could never have conceived. This control cannot be suddenly withdrawn. For a very long time to come the world-states whose rise we have traced must continue to be the means by which the political discoveries of Europe, as well as her material civilisation, are made available for the rest of the world. The world-states are such recent things that we have not yet found a place for them in our political philosophy. But unless we find a place for them, and think in terms of them, in the future, we shall be in danger of a terrible shipwreck.

'If, then, it is essential, not only for the economic development of the world, but for the political advancement of its more backward peoples, that the political suzerainty of the European peoples should survive, and as a consequence that the world should continue to be dominated by a group of great world-states, how are we to conjure away

the nightmare of inter-imperial rivalry which has brought upon us the present catastrophe, and seems to threaten us with yet more appalling ruin in the future? Only by resolving and ensuring, as at the great settlement we may be able to do, that the necessary political control of Europe over the outer world shall in future be exercised not merely in the interests of the mistress-states, but in accordance with principles which are just in themselves, and which will give to all peoples a fair chance of making the best use of their powers. But how are we to discover these principles, if the ideas of nationality and self-government, to which we pin our faith in Europe, are to be held inapplicable to the greater part of the non-European world? There is only one possible source of instruction: our past experience, which has now extended over four centuries, and which we have in this book endeavoured to survey.

'Now while it is undeniably true that the mere lust of power has always been present in the imperial activities of the European peoples, it is certainly untrue (as our study ought to have shown) that it has ever been the sole motive, except, perhaps, in the great German challenge. And in the course of their experience the colonising peoples have gradually worked out certain principles in their treatment of subject peoples, which ought to be of use to us. The fullest and the most varied experience is that of the British Empire: it is the oldest of all the world-states; it alone includes regions of the utmost variety of

types, new lands peopled by European settlers, realms of ancient civilisation like India, and regions inhabited by backward and primitive peoples. It would be absurd to claim that its methods are perfect and infallible. But they have been very varied, and quite astonishingly successful. And it is because they seem to afford clearer guidance than any other part of the experiments which we have recorded that we have studied them, especially in their later developments, with what may have seemed a disproportionate fulness. What are the principles which experience has gradually worked out in the British Empire? They cannot be embodied in a single formula, because they vary according to the condition and development of the lands to which they apply.

'But in the first place we have learnt by a very long experience that in lands inhabited by European settlers, who bring with them European traditions, the only satisfactory solution is to be found in the concession of the fullest self-governing rights, since these settlers are able to use them, and in the encouragement of that sentiment of unity which we call the national spirit. And this involves a recognition of the fact that nationality is never to be defined solely in terms of race or language, but can arise, and should be encouraged to arise, among racially divided communities such as Canada and South Africa. Any attempt to interpret nationhood in terms of race is not merely dangerous, but ruinous; and such endeavours to stimulate or accentuate racial conflict, as Germany

has been guilty of in Brazil, in South Africa, and even in America, must be, if successful, fatal to the progress of the countries affected, and dangerous to the peace of the world.

'In the second place we have learnt that in lands of ancient civilisation, where ruling castes have for centuries been in the habit of exploiting their subjects, the supreme gift which Europe can offer is that of internal peace and a firmly administered and equal law, which will render possible the gradual rise of a sense of unity, and the gradual training of the people in the habits of life that make self-government possible. How soon national unity can be established, or self-government made practicable in any full sense, must be matter of debate. But the creation of these things is, or ought to be, the ultimate aim of European government in such countries. And in the meantime, and until they become fully masters of their own fate, these lands, so our British experience tells us, ought to be treated as distinct political units; they should pay no tribute; all their resources should be devoted to their own development; and they should not be expected or required to maintain larger forces than are necessary for their own defence. At the same time, the ruling power should claim no special privileges for its own citizens, but should throw open the markets of such realms equally to all nations. In short it should act not as a master, but as a trustee, on behalf of its subjects and also on behalf of civilisation.

'In the third place we have learnt that in the backward regions of the earth it is the duty of the ruling power, *firstly*, to protect its primitive subjects from unscrupulous exploitation, to guard their simple customs, proscribing only those which are immoral, and to afford them the means of a gradual emancipation from barbarism; *secondly*, to develop the economic resources of these regions for the needs of the industrial world, to open them up by modern communications, and to make them available on equal terms to all nations, giving no advantage to its own citizens.

'In spite of lapses and defects, it is an undeniable historical fact that these are the principles which have been wrought out and applied in the administration of the British Empire during the nineteenth century. They are not vague and Utopian dreams; they are a matter of daily practice. If they can be applied by one of the world-states, and that the greatest, why should they not be applied by the rest? But if these principles became universal, is it not apparent that all danger of a catastrophic war between these powers would be removed, since every reason for it would have vanished? Thus the necessary and advantageous tutelage of Europe over the non-European world, and the continuance of the great world-states, could be combined with the conjuring away of the ever-present terror of war, and with the gradual training of the non-European peoples to enjoy the political methods of Europe; while the lesser states without extra-European dominions need no

longer feel themselves stunted and reduced to economic dependence upon their great neighbours. Thus, and thus alone, can the benefits of the long development which we have traced be reaped in full; thus alone can the dominion of the European peoples over the world be made to mean justice and the chance for all peoples to make the best of their powers.'

Such were the reflections, the misgivings, and the hopes of one obscure observer as he peered into the future during one of the darkest periods of the war. How far have events justified or falsified his prognostications? It is still too early to give any assured answer. But the war has been followed by some sort of settlement; and in the next chapter we must try—premature and uncertain as the attempt must be—to consider what light is shed upon these problems by the events which have followed the war.

XI

AFTER THE WAR

I

When the war had at last been ended by the defeat of Germany, a very remarkable assemblage gathered at Versailles to settle the terms of peace. It was nominally only a gathering of the victor-powers; Germany and her allies, the few surviving neutrals, and ruined Russia (which had already made peace) were therefore excluded. Yet in spite of these omissions, the Congress of Versailles came nearer to being a representation of the whole human race than any assemblage that had ever met in history, unless we make an exception for the abortive Hague Conferences of 1899 and 1907. In this respect the Congress of Versailles differed from every other peace congress in modern history. For here, alongside of the European Powers, were the representatives of Japan and China, India and Siam, the United States, the South American republics, and the great British dominions; and the questions to be decided affected every region of the globe. When they came together, the representatives of all these diverse peoples could not but feel the imaginative appeal of the occasion. They recognised that they were assembled not

merely for the purpose of dictating terms to beaten enemies, but for the purpose of shaping a new world-order.

Yet almost from the first the great majority of these assembled representatives found that they were to have practically no voice in the determination of the settlement. The great world-states, whose growth we have been tracing, took the game into their own hands, and settled every question; just as, a hundred years before, the four Great Powers had settled everything at Vienna—an ominous parallel! The survivors among the world-states, the British Commonwealth, America, France, Italy, and Japan (Germany and Russia having fallen out of the ranks) formed themselves into a Supreme Council, conducted their debates upon every crucial question behind closed doors, and left to the representatives of the rest of the world little more than the functions of defending their own interests privately, and of accepting and signing the completed agreements.

Perhaps this was inevitable. After all, the spokesmen of the world-states represented a majority of the human race; it would have been absurd that the voice of tiny and backward societies like Hayti and Liberia should have equal weight with the voice of the British Commonwealth or the United States or France, and in the proceedings of a diplomatic congress each state counts for one only. But indubitably the ascendancy of the Supreme Council, which grew more dominating and more exclusive as the Congress proceeded, and

in which three men practically enthroned themselves as the joint (if quarrelsome) dictators of the world, came as a disillusionment: outside as well as inside the Congress men had hoped that a new era in the settlement of world-affairs was about to dawn, and that the domination exercised by the spokesmen of a few great powers in secret conclave would somehow be replaced by a more genuine and open consultation of world opinion. Undeniably this was not easy to organise. It was a difficult problem to find a mode in which the legitimate preponderance of the world-states could be combined with a proper degree of influence for the lesser states. The Congress did not find any solution of this problem so far as its own proceedings were concerned. Accordingly, there was a steady decline of seriousness and interest in the subsequent congresses which determined the conditions of peace with Austria, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Turkey. Even after the peace treaties had been signed, and the Congresses had broken up, the Supreme Council continued to exist, nominally for the purpose of carrying into effect the terms of the treaties, but in effect it assumed a sort of standing dictatorship over international affairs. Presently America withdrew, feeling that things had gone wrong, but unable to define precisely how, and fell back into her old aloofness, washing her hands of European affairs and therefore also of world-affairs; Japan was too far away to take a very active part; Italy fell into the background; and what survived of the great

Congress, and of the world-unity which it was to establish, seemed to be a series of hurried and secret conclaves between the Prime Ministers of France and Britain.

If this had been all, the development would have borne an ominous resemblance to what happened in 1815, when the great League of Peace which was to have followed the Congress of Vienna degenerated into a series of secret conclaves among the Great Powers, which earned the anger and opprobrium of the world. That had wrecked the hope of European peace and co-operation which had been fostered by the Napoleonic War; this later and perturbingly similar development seemed likely to wreck, in the same way, the hopes of world-peace and co-operation which the Great War seemed to have brought within reach.

Happily the Congress of Versailles had begun its labours by setting on foot an organisation for the permanent maintenance of world co-operation and the preservation of peace. The Covenant of the League of Nations was incorporated in each of the peace-treaties as its first and governing section; and the scheme was so drawn that every state in the world, including enemies and neutrals, could be included in the League. The driving-force which ensured the acceptance of this scheme was supplied by President Wilson; though his ideas as to the structure and working of the League seem to have been vague, and the actual plan owed much to some of the British representatives at the Congress.

Two main problems faced the devisers of this noble experiment in the organisation of world-co-operation. The first was the problem of reconciling the existence of such a league with the independent sovereignty of the member-states. This difficulty was met by giving to the League, in effect, only advisory powers, except in the event of disputes likely to lead to war, in regard to which the member-states pledged themselves, by the mere act of joining, to adopt the methods of inquiry, arbitration, and delay laid down by the League. In all other matters the recommendations of the League would only become valid when accepted and embodied in state-law by the individual states. Thus the League might report on the scale of armament required by various powers; it might recommend the adoption of uniform minimum rules regarding the conditions of labour; but each state would be free to accept, to modify or to disregard these recommendations. What was hoped was that the organised expression of civilised opinion which the League would give would have a real and growing weight; and that under this pressure states would be ready to advance in step, when they would hesitate to advance singly lest they should put themselves at a disadvantage with their neighbours. This was as far as it was practicable to go; and if a few of the leading states could be persuaded to abandon their touchy and suspicious egotism, and honestly to give their support, great advances towards real co-operation might by these means be secured.

But the League had to be genuinely a League of independent states, not a super-state.

The second problem was that of finding a means whereby each state might feel that its voice was effectively heard, without overriding the legitimate preponderance of influence which belongs to the great world-states. An ingenious solution was given to this problem by the creation of two governing bodies, an Assembly in which every state has an equal voice, and a Council in which the world-states sit as permanent members over against a number of lesser states, selected for this privilege from time to time by the Assembly. The world-states, having interests which range over the globe, might be expected, from motives of self-interest, to take a broad view on vexed questions in which they were not directly concerned. The lesser states would often be able to consider controversial issues as quite disinterested parties, and their influence would thus be invaluable; the mere fact of their presence would be a safeguard; and if they should be tempted to think only of their individual interests, the knowledge that they would be replaced by the Assembly would form a check. Each state was to have only one vote, whether in the Assembly or the Council; but it might have more than one representative, and this made it possible for a world-state to ensure that the voice of its non-European members should be directly heard in both bodies. This ingenious scheme enabled the unique and anomalous position of the British Commonwealth (which is one state and

many states at the same time) to be admirably dealt with: the great dominions were given distinct voices in the Assembly, while the Commonwealth was represented as a single unit in the Council.

Taken as a whole this great project was a very wise and statesmanlike device for giving form and permanence to the world-unity which the expansion of Europe had created and which the war had shown to be a reality; it did this without invading the independent sovereignty of any state, except by ensuring that every state should feel the full force of any strong current of civilised opinion. We are not here concerned to analyse the machinery which the League was required to establish for the prevention of war—its permanent international court of justice, its methods of ensuring delay and inquiry on subjects of dispute not suitable for judicial decision, its devices for bringing pressure to bear on recalcitrant states. Had any such system been in working order in the years before the Great War, it would have profoundly modified the course of events. Even if the devices for avoiding war had failed, the existence of the League would have supplied just that which, as we saw in the last chapter, was most needed—a means of bringing home to all peoples a sense of their common interest.

Forty-eight sovereign states have become members of the League of Nations; others are ready to join; and the first Assemblies of the League have already shown us a representation of the whole world yet more complete than that which was

given by the Congress of Versailles. In form and on paper the world-unity which is the outcome of the expansion of Europe has received an impressive and hopeful expression; and in many fields the varied work of the League and its commissions has shown a heartening spectacle of organised co-operation among the world's peoples.

But the League has many difficulties to contend with ere it can be said to be firmly established, and first among these ranks the lukewarmness with which it is regarded by the world-states. They pay it lip-service, but have hitherto refused to take it seriously. The informal secret conclaves which are dignified by the name of the Supreme Council have persisted in dealing with all questions of importance, and in withdrawing from the League even some questions that definitely fall within its purview under the terms of the Covenant. It is true that the problem of Armenia was referred to the League by the Supreme Council; but as this problem had been found to be all but insoluble without the employment of great military force, the reference had the air of a gesture of contempt.

More recently the very difficult task of arbitrating between the rival claims of Germany and Poland in Upper Silesia has been referred to the League. But it was only referred because the principal members of the Supreme Council differed so acutely on this question that they feared a break-up of their system; and meanwhile their disputes and delays had immensely increased

the complexity of the problem. In both cases the League was only brought into play when the problems were already so difficult that the dictators were eager to get rid of them as a means of saving their prestige. In both cases the questions were 'referred' as from a higher to a lower power, and the Supreme Council still clung to its supremacy.

It is perhaps natural that the two or three men who thus sit like Jove on Olympus should be loth to part with the delicious sense of omnipotence that this arrangement allows them to enjoy, and should persuade themselves that the questions with which they deal are too intricate and delicate to be safely submitted to such a body as the Council of the League. But so long as this state of things continues, the League of Nations cannot become a reality. Until the rulers of the world-states accept it for what it is—the only means yet devised for overcoming the dangers which we touched upon in the last chapter—the League must remain a paper scheme; and that organised co-operation of the world which is the hope of the future must remain a dream, though it could so easily be made a reality.

But a yet shrewder blow at the League, and at the world co-operation which it represents, was struck by the United States when they refused to accept the peace treaty, and specifically repudiated the League in the form which had been given to it largely by the accredited representative of the United States themselves. The motives of this

action were manifold and intelligible. In part it was due to the influence of party strife, and to the personal unpopularity of President Wilson: he was identified with the League, and it must be condemned for that reason. In part it was due to jealousy of the number of votes allotted to the British Commonwealth; though it is hard to see why Canada should not have an equal voice with Hayti, and the Monroe Doctrine enables America to influence the South and Central American states almost as directly as Britain can influence Canada and Australia. In part it was due to a fear that membership of the League would involve a restriction of America's sovereign rights and a limitation of the control over foreign policy conferred by the constitution upon the Senate; yet the corresponding restriction has been accepted by all the forty-eight states in the League. In part it was due to a quite valid objection to one of the Articles of the Covenant, Article 10, on which something will be said later. In part it represented a reaction, after the emotions of the war, to the old tradition of aloofness from 'foreign entanglements,' and to the old illusion that it was possible for any nation, even the United States, to live 'for itself alone.' For these reasons leading politicians of the United States committed themselves, during the heat of a party fight, to denunciations of the League so vehement that even if they wished to do so it is difficult for them to play their proper part in the organised co-operation of the world without stultifying themselves. Yet the spirit

created by the war, and the current of world-thought, are too strong to permit America to rest satisfied with mere negation; and her statesmen are evidently striving to find a way out of the difficulty. Sometimes they appear to hope that the forty-eight nations in the League will agree to cancel their formal undertakings and the treaties which they have all solemnly ratified, in order that America may shape a new League of Nations under another name; but this, besides being a rather large demand, presents the difficulty that a repudiation of the League involves the cancellation of all the peace treaties in which it is embodied as an essential part. An alternative method which finds greater favour is that, disregarding the League, America should summon another conference, which might achieve under her presidency some of the most important work that the League was established to perform. Yet another mode might be to indicate to the Assembly of the League (which has by the terms of its covenant the right of amending its own constitution) the minimum changes which would be necessary to enable America to accept membership. By one mode or another America is bent upon playing once more the great part which ought to be hers in the councils of a unified world. Her help is needed; she desires to give it; the trend of the world's thought forbids her to return to an isolation which, however splendid, is sterile. And in these conditions the obstacles will sooner or later be overcome.

II

We have dwelt upon the creation of the League of Nations because the establishment of an organisation representing all the peoples of the earth would, if it could be achieved, or will, when it is achieved, be in a real sense the culmination of that long process which we have surveyed in the foregoing pages. With the other aspects of the peace treaties we are not here concerned, except in so far as they affected the extra-European world. In that connection the most important decisions of the peace-makers were that Germany was deprived, by the Treaty of Versailles, of all her dominions outside Europe ; and that, by the Treaty of Sèvres, the Turkish Empire was broken up, and the Sultan lost control over Armenia, Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine, and Arabia, and his claim to suzerainty over Egypt. It fell to the peace-makers to determine how these wide lands should be disposed of ; and in doing so they were, in form, at any rate, governed by new principles which were laid down by the covenant of the League of Nations.

During the course of the war many theorists, recognising to how large an extent colonial rivalry had been responsible for the friction among the Great Powers which had produced the conflict, had advocated the placing of all the lands of tropical Africa under international government. By this means they hoped at once to provide the civilised administration which was needed both in the interests of the native population and in the

interests of commerce, and at the same time to secure freedom of access for trade purposes on equal terms to all peoples, and to put an end to a serious cause of conflict. The ends proposed were admirable; the means quite impracticable. It was not to be expected that the Great Powers would willingly surrender territories on which they had expended blood, treasure, and thought. And even if they had been willing to do so, a system of international government, conducted by officers drawn from various states with widely different traditions and methods, who would therefore easily be brought into a state of friction with one another, was of all systems the least likely to work smoothly and well. Where partial experiments of this kind had been tried, as in Macedonia and Persia, they had had no success. All experience goes to show that the administration of a great area can only be successfully carried on if it is marked by unity of character, and if the officers who are responsible for its working understand one another easily and are subject to a controlling authority which they cannot disregard; and these conditions can obviously be most readily secured when responsibility is thrown upon a single nation and its government.

But the framers of the League of Nations saw a way whereby these conditions might be secured, and yet safeguards be taken which would secure all the aims that the internationalists set before themselves. This proposal was that the government of regions inhabited by backward or dis-

organised peoples should in each case be entrusted to a particular state; but that these ruling states should govern the regions entrusted to them not as irresponsible sovereigns, but as trustees on behalf of the civilised world, under the terms of mandates granted by the League of Nations. These mandates were to define formally the conditions which should be observed in the government of the territories covered by them—notably the just treatment of the subject peoples, and the securing of free access on equal terms for the traders of all nations; and the mandatory states were to be required to report annually to the League of Nations on their administration of the territories entrusted to them. These were, in effect, the conditions which we defined in the last chapter as the essential foundations of a better order; and no civilised government could reasonably take exception to them. It is true that the terms of a mandate might conceivably be disregarded by the mandatory state, and that if this happened a remedy would be difficult to obtain. But at least, in these circumstances, any power which treated its primitive subjects as Germany had treated the Hereros would be breaking its own solemn undertaking in the eyes of the world; it would not be free to say that its methods of government were solely its own concern; and it would be open to the criticism of the whole civilised world. The system of mandates had this further advantage, that it was elastic; a mandate for Armenia or Mesopotamia might be framed in quite different terms from

a mandate for a region inhabited wholly by primitive peoples. And this was recognised by the scheme, which provided for three distinct types of mandates: one for the Turkish lands, with their ancient traditions; one for the backward peoples of tropical Africa; and a third for those lands (South-West Africa and the Pacific territories) which it was thought desirable to place under the more complete control of the mandatory states. If the system of mandates had existed in 1884, when the Berlin Conference defined the conditions under which the partition of Africa was to take place, the history of the generation before the war might have been very different.

The mandatory system, in short, was the most appropriate and the best way of putting into definite form what events had proved to be the real justification of the rapid development of European control over the non-European world: it recognised in form that the world-states were acting as the agents of civilisation, provided that they behaved as trustees on behalf of their simple subjects and on behalf of the civilised world. If the world-states could have brought themselves to accept the new system without reserve, and to place under it those of their existing territories to which such a system would be appropriate, the opening of a new era in the relations between Europe and the non-European world would, indeed, have been clearly marked, and the dangers of future conflict would have been greatly diminished. Britain, at any rate, might have adopted such a

course without being false to the traditions of her policy, or making any real sacrifice of power. But in view of all that had happened, it would perhaps have been unreasonable to expect the world-states to adopt such a course. America would have been loth to abandon her commercial monopoly of the Philippines, France to throw open the markets of her North-African empire; and even free-trade Britain might have hesitated to abandon the power of giving preference to her own nationals in the distribution of concessions for the development of the material resources of her dominions.

The mandatory system, therefore, was limited to the colonies taken from Germany, and to the provinces cut off from the Turkish Empire. Under the terms of the Treaties, it was the Supreme Council, not the League of Nations, which distributed mandates for these lands. It distributed them among its own members; and it also undertook the task of drafting the mandates, merely engaging to submit them for criticism and registration to the League of Nations. Even this process was long delayed. It was delayed in part by the failure to obtain ratification of the Turkish Treaty; but mainly by the insistence of America that, though she had withdrawn from the Supreme Council, and refused to join the League of Nations, she must, as one of the victor-powers, give her approval to each mandate before it was submitted to the League of Nations. For this reason, the Turkish and the African mandates were still unready for submission to the League when its second Assembly

broke up in October 1921. These circumstances have, with or without reason, contributed to undermine belief in the efficacy of the mandatory system.

It is enough to say that in the distribution of the territories to be allotted France received mandates for Syria, a province of the Turkish Empire in which she had taken special interest since before the Crimean War, and (among the German colonies) for southern Togoland and almost the whole of the Cameroons, acquisitions which consolidated her immense empire in northern Africa; while Japan obtained a mandate for the scattered islets of Micronesia, Italy for the south-western part of Asia Minor, and Belgium for a corner of German East Africa. America was invited to accept a mandate for Armenia, a post of danger and responsibility which no other power desired; she declined to accept it. But the bulk of the mandatory territories fell to Britain or to the other members of the British Commonwealth. New Zealand got Samoa; Australia received German New Guinea and the Bismarck Archipelago; South Africa obtained German South-West, which rounded off her own territory; while Britain herself obtained, as her share of the inheritance of the Turk, the large and troublous province of Mesopotamia and the little land of Palestine where she had undertaken to help in the creation of a Jewish national state; and, as her share of the German colonial empire, almost the whole of German East Africa, the northern part of Togoland, and a strip of the Cameroons.

Let us assume, as no doubt we fairly may, that

all these territories will be justly administered; let us assume that no wiser allocation could possibly have been made than that which was actually effected; let us assume that the mandates will contain, when at last they are published, every provision that could reasonably be demanded. With all these assumptions, it still remains true that the circumstances in which the allocation has been carried out have been such as gravely to hamper the introduction and working of the new system, and, in the eyes of the non-European world, to undermine confidence in the good faith of the controlling powers. Reasonably or unreasonably, justly or unjustly, some of the peoples whose fortunes are now being determined are tempted to ask whether the precious word 'mandate' is more than a mask to cover a distribution of the spoils of war not different in kind from the partitions which have followed earlier wars. Such questions, challenged by long delays, are dangerous in a world now restlessly critical of the motives and methods of the European world-states.

In redrawing the map of Europe, the peacemakers may or may not have succeeded in arriving at an adjustment which has in it the elements of stability. At least, in this task, they had the guidance of a clearly defined principle, the principle of nationality, to which on the whole they were reasonably faithful; and as it is one of the morals of modern history that national boundaries, once established, are extraordinarily stable, there rests in this good ground for hope that the terri-

torial settlement of Europe may be, and possibly ought to be, permanent. But in redrawing the map of the non-European world there was no corresponding principle to guide the peace-makers. And when we reflect how recently the distribution of the greater part of the non-European world had been effected, and in how accidental and arbitrary a manner, by bargainings among the European Powers, it is impossible to believe that there will be any such permanence in the lines of demarcation recently drawn as the national principle may possibly give to the new political geography of Europe. It needs a stalwart faith to believe that we have, in these secret conclaves of the Supreme Council, arrived at the natural, just, and final political distribution of the land-surface of the globe. As we have seen, the world-states exhibited an unexpected degree of strength and stability during the war, recent and artificial creations though they were. But to admit this is not to admit that their boundaries ought never to be altered. There is a rising ferment in many parts of the extra-European world. Something resembling the nationalist sentiment—caught by infection from Europe—is working like yeast in many lands. The heady demand for the vague and large thing called ' self-determination ' is rising among many peoples. In the Moslem world the old fervour, which has the strength of national feeling, is becoming strong again, and who knows to what potency it may not grow ? Who can predict what hopes and dreams may not arise among the peoples

of Africa or the Pacific, as they grow out of childhood into adolescence? And are we to say, in face of all these facts or possibilities, that we have arrived at an adjustment of the territories of the whole world which can be regarded as final and unalterable? Though Europe has now completed the domination of the world, we are surely only at the beginning of the changes which the ideas born in Europe will produce in the outer world.

These reflections are neither otiose nor visionary; they are of immediate practical importance. For Article 10 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, which is now binding upon nine-tenths of the world, practically guarantees the 'territorial integrity' of all the member-states; and this, of course, covers the heterogeneous and far-flung empires of the world-states. This was the Article of the Covenant to which the United States took strongest exception; and we have already suggested that their objection on this ground was valid. In incorporating this provision in the Covenant its authors struck the rock upon which all previous projects of world-peace have come to shipwreck. St. Pierre's *Project of Perpetual Peace* rested upon a guarantee of the territories of all princes at the date of the proposed universal treaty;[1] if his scheme had matured, the civilised world would have pledged itself to maintain the monstrous petty divisions into which Germany and Italy were broken in the eighteenth century. The statesmen of Vienna, a hundred years ago, based their League

[1] See *Nationalism and Internationalism*, pp. 146 ff.

of Peace upon a universal guarantee of the Vienna settlement, and the attempt to enforce this aroused against them the hatred of all who desired a readjustment of the political arrangements of Europe along national lines, and sentenced their well-meant project of peace to failure.[1] In the 'sixties Napoleon III. proposed a European Conference to redefine frontiers, and the proposal might possibly have averted the series of nationalist wars which followed; it was made impracticable by Austria's insistence on the sanctity of the Vienna settlement. Now, after the most ruinous of wars, the architects of a new world have committed the same blunder, though not in quite so irremediable a form; they have tried to attribute sanctity not merely to the territorial settlement of Europe, which, being based upon the national principle, may possibly be stable, but to the whole territorial system of the globe, as it has resulted from the fevered imperialist activities of the last generation. Should any dispute arise affecting the territories of any state in any part of the world, the League of Nations would seem to be estopped by Article 10 from supporting any solution which involves a change in existing boundaries; on any such question its International Court is bound to decide in favour of the existing possessor. It is thus deprived of the most valuable function which such a body could be called upon to perform: that of revising treaties which lapse of time or changing conditions have proved to be unjust.

[1] See *Nationalism and Internationalism*, pp. 173 ff.

There is, however, one possible safeguard against the wreck of the great and hopeful project of world-co-operation embodied in the League of Nations, which this clause might involve. The Assembly of the League has the power to amend its own constitution. And as the United States have abstained from joining the League largely on the ground of their objection to this clause, and as all the existing members are anxious to secure the adhesion of the United States, it is possible that this danger may be overcome. Though many states doubtless attach a value to Article 10 because it guarantees their possession of territories over which they do not feel that their mastery is secure, they may be willing to amend this Article as the price of American co-operation. In that event the abstention of the United States may turn out to have been a service to the cause of world co-operation.

It is in some respects a gloomy and a disappointing conclusion to which we have been driven by the consideration of the settlement of 1918-19. For we have been compelled to conclude that the statesmanship of the men who were responsible for the reconstruction of a ruined world fell gravely short of a great opportunity. Theirs was no easy task; and the circumstances in which they had to work were supremely difficult. But the most that can be said in their favour, in that part of their work which was concerned with the organisation of world-order, is that their blunders were not committed in a form which is irremediable.

III

The time has not yet come when it will be possible to make a just analysis of the forces that have been set at work in the non-European world by the war and the settlement which followed it, or to estimate the results which are likely to follow from them; all the more so because, amid the hurry of new and difficult problems by which the war-weary world is distracted, we have little thought to spare for more remote events, and receive little trustworthy information regarding them.

But it is plain that a profound unrest is at work in every part of the world. There never was a time when imagination, foresight, and steadiness of judgment were more needed, or when mere fertility in immediate expedients to evade momentary crises was more dangerous as a substitute for statesmanship. The non-European world has lost much of its trust in the wisdom and uprightness of Europe, not wholly without reason. Among the backward peoples there is a danger that the desperate financial plight into which the mistress-states have been brought may lead to an era of exploitation and to a correspondingly violent reaction. The brutality of war seems in many cases to have induced a temper of high-handed arrogance which may have ominous results. There is a temptation to dragoon and regiment native populations, to compel them to forced labour, to pay scanty respect to their rights or

claims, in the hope of producing wealth rapidly. It does not yet seem to have gone very far, but it is a dangerous tendency at a time when all the non-European peoples are showing a greater boldness in the claim for equality of treatment Among the negroes of Africa as among those of America there are signs that a spirit of revolt is at work; we have seen recently, for the first time, negro conferences preaching racial antipathy. It is not safe to assume that the docility of the African peoples is eternal. Many of them have been taught to fight. Many of them have been educated.

In the wide regions still dominated by Islam there is, as we have already seen, an almost universal stirring of the waters. It began, long before the war, in the remarkable revival of religious enthusiasm which centres in the activities of the Senussi, and wields a powerful influence which is all the greater because it is underground and difficult to trace. It has produced a great missionary movement among the tribes of Africa which is bringing about the conversion of these peoples to Islam with a rapidity that puts the work of Christian missionaries altogether into the shade. During the war it showed itself in a Pan-Islamic movement whose importance was not sufficiently regarded. Since the war it has shown itself in the powerful nationalist movement among the Turks of Asia Minor which has made Kemal a thorn in the side of the dictators of Europe, and threatens to overturn the Turkish settlement. It has shown itself in the widespread unrest that is

seething among the Arabs of Mesopotamia and Syria, and turning the task of organising these provinces into a very slow and costly business. It has shown itself in the turbulence of the north-west frontier tribes, and in the restless aggressions of Afghanistan, which has given more anxious moments to the government of India since the end of the war than for a generation. Some of the leaders of the Indian Mussulmans have publicly said that if the Amir of Afghanistan should proclaim a *jihad* or religious crusade and invade India, it would be the duty of Indian Mussulmans to support him. Moslem agitation in protest against the downfall of Turkey has contributed very largely to produce the bitter enmity to the Indian government which is expressed in the non-co-operation movement; the destruction of the British power in India is the proclaimed end of Mussulmans of this school, who perhaps hope for a revival of the old Moslem empire in India, though they dare not say so openly lest they should alienate their Hindu allies. And the stirring of the waters of Islam had a good deal to do with the outbreaks of violence in Egypt, and the demand for a complete withdrawal of British, that is of European, control. The Moslem world is astir: the war has awakened it to the fact that the mastery of the world has passed to the Christians, and it is loth to swallow this bitter pill.

Elsewhere the heady doctrine of ' self-determination ' is fermenting actively. In many lands the challenge is being addressed, tacitly or openly, to

the agents of European civilisation: 'What right have you to rule us? We did not choose you.' Outside of Europe, as within it, all authority is being challenged; and in most cases the challengers have no clear idea as to what they want to substitute for that which they are eager to destroy. There never was a more mischievous phrase than 'self-determination'; for it obscures the fact that no man, and no nation, either can or may singly determine his own fate without regard to others, and that 'ourselves alone' is the most destructive and sterile of creeds; it disregards the fact that, even if it were possible, 'self-determination' postulates a self, and it is only by a slow and painful process that any body of people acquires a 'self,' attains that self-conscious unity and homogeneity which selfhood implies—becomes, in short, a 'nation.' But the phrase, and the yeasty ideas that lie behind it, are doing their work—nowhere more actively than in India and in Egypt.

In India the bold experiment of the new constitution which we discussed in the last chapter has not given satisfaction. It is repudiated with scorn by the hotheads of the National Congress. Led by a visionary whose aim is to obliterate every trace of Western influence from India, who wants to let the railways go derelict and to substitute the spinning-wheel for the factory, and who dreams of a return to the India of the Vedas, they have attempted to make all government impossible by 'non-co-operation,' by a sort of universal passive strike. They have not so far succeeded, and will

probably never succeed. But two results have followed from their efforts. On the one hand, by taking no part in the elections for the new representative assemblies, they have made it possible for these bodies to be filled by men of moderate views, deeply perturbed by the unrest which surrounds them; and this has helped the great experiment to get a good start. How it will work if this policy is reversed, and the assemblies are filled with raucous and irresponsible extremists, is one of the problems of the future. The second feature of the non-co-operation movement is that it has, unlike any earlier Indian political movement, touched the silent masses of the peasantry, who are nine-tenths of the population. They cannot be made to understand political problems; their languages scarcely contain the words for 'constitution,' 'parliament,' 'representation,' 'responsibility.' But they can understand hatred; they can be taught to lay the blame for the shortage of their crops, or the high price of *dhoties*, or the coming of plague, upon the white man; they can be led into pitiful movements of panic, like that which sent thousands fleeing to die in the Afghan hills because they were told a Satanic government intended to destroy their religion, or like that which drove hundreds of coolies to desert the tea plantations of Assam, and die on the roadside, they scarcely knew why.

A very dangerous ferment is at work in India, and no man may prophesy what the outcome will be. It is possible that what the extremists desire

may happen: that confusion will grow, and that the British power, despairing of maintaining the peace and law which it has so long upheld, will withdraw from India, and cease to pay to her the steady tribute of character and brain which has been so long rendered. Then chaos would come again; until it was ended either by a Japanese conquest, or (as one lover of India has predicted) by a combination of European and Indian merchants to raise an army which could maintain order—the East India Company over again. But that is a pessimist view. The best Indian opinion values the British connection, sees in its continuance the only hope of a steady progression towards orderly self-government, and recognises that in conditions so complex as those of India such progress must be gradual if it is to be secure. For them the highest political ideal which India can entertain is that of free partnership in the British Commonwealth. And the real conflict is between those Indians who think thus, and who desire a genuine co-operation with the West, and those destructive fanatics who desire to destroy all that the West has done, but have no clear idea of what they would construct in its place, save a vague notion that they will return to the 'good old days.' The former are the real progressives; the latter are reactionaries. If the progressives succeed, it will be by their own sanity, capacity and sense of responsibility; physical force will not permanently help them. To succeed they must display qualities of courage and statesmanship such

as few ages and few countries have ever produced; for the problem of self-government in India is the most complex in the world.

In Egypt a similar wave of enthusiasm has demanded the withdrawal of the British protectorate, and the disappearance of that band of administrators who have in a generation raised Egypt out of bankruptcy into prosperity, and given her the equipment of a civilised state. Egypt claims complete freedom from European tutelage; and it seems likely that she will win her way. The Egyptian problem is much simpler than the Indian problem, because Egypt is a smaller and a more homogeneous country than India; and it is theoretically possible that the Western system of representative government—which is showing signs of breaking down in the Western lands—will be worked efficiently by the Egyptians. Power will, of course, fall to the small ascendant classes who were the agents of Mehemet's tyranny and of Tewfik's corruption. The question of the future will be whether the docile and submissive peasantry will be able to preserve the security and wellbeing which Western government has given to them, for the first time in many centuries; or whether the old evils of tyranny and corruption will revive. This depends upon whether one generation has been enough to impregnate the old ascendant classes with the moral and civic ideals without which no system of self-government can work, and to teach the subject classes to maintain their own rights.

Ferment also is at work in the Far East. The old

and stagnant civilisation of China has awakened from its long sleep; and, rejecting most of its traditional methods of government, has relapsed into anarchy under forms borrowed from the West. The war seems to have removed the danger of a partitioning of China among the European world-states which appeared to be imminent twenty years ago. Japan has taken advantage of the war, and of the Chinese chaos, to establish an unwelcomed hold upon some of China's most valuable resources: she has taken the place of the European rivals, for the moment at any rate. Whether this state of things heralds the creation of a great Sino-Japanese world-state, dominating the Eastern Pacific; or whether China will be able, perhaps with Western help, to reorganise herself on Western lines as Japan did nearly two generations ago, is one of the great problems of the future. In either event the world-sovereignty of Europe, though not of European methods and ideas, is seriously challenged. China is a great question-mark, like India; and events pregnant with consequence must happen in these ancient lands of oriental civilisation during the next generation.

In face of all these problems of unrest, what could be more shallow than to imagine that the 'territorial integrity' of the world-powers as they have been defined by the pundits of Versailles can be guaranteed as permanent? What can be more foolish than to take such a fond dream as the foundation of a stable world-order? The stream of change will proceed yet more rapidly in the

coming generations than in their predecessors; it will proceed with redoubled rapidity because of the spate of new ideas, drawn from Western springs, which was already pouring down the old channels even before the war, and which has become doubly turbulent since that dreadful cloudburst. All the more reason why the world-states and the little nations upon whom must fall the responsibility of turning these waters to fruitful rather than to destructive uses, should give what reality the times permit to the felt unity and interdependence of the whole world which is the greatest outcome of the expansion of Europe; for only so can safety be hoped for.

IV

What is to become of the group of world-states whose creation is the greatest event in the history of the last age? It is a question upon which no one may venture a prediction. But some things seem clear. Their rise marked a necessary stage towards the unification of the world under a single civilisation; their maintenance is likely to be still necessary as the safeguard of this unification, as far ahead as we can see; but only on one condition, that by mutual co-operation and by respect for the claims of lesser states, they make themselves not a terror and a source of dread, but pillars of a world-order.

But there is one among them, the oldest, the largest, the most variegated and the most loosely organised, which has already, in this juncture,

reached a crisis of its fate. The termination of the war has reproduced in the British Commonwealth, on a vastly greater scale, a situation not unlike that of 1763, when a dazzling victory was the precursor of acute conflict between the members of the Commonwealth, and ultimately of disruption. Now, as then, the Commonwealth has emerged from a war for existence, in which mother and daughter lands have shared. Now, as then, the strain and pressure of the war have brought to light deficiencies in the system of the Commonwealth. Now, as then, the most patent of these deficiencies is the fact that, generous as the self-governing powers of the great Dominions have been, they have still had limits; and the irresistible tendency of self-government to work towards its own fulfilment must once more show itself. For there are three spheres in which even the most fully self-governing of the Dominions have had no effective control: they have not shared in the determination of foreign policy, they have not shared in the definition of the methods to be adopted in dealing with dependent or backward communities, and they have not shared in the organisation and direction of imperial defence. The direction of foreign policy, the control of dependencies, and the responsibility (and with it almost the whole burden) of organising imperial defence, rested until 1914 solely with Britain. Until the Great War, foreign policy seemed to be a matter of purely European interest, not directly concerning the great Dominions; the bearing of

the policy pursued towards backward peoples upon the welfare of the whole Commonwealth was not apparent; and the problems of imperial defence did not appear very pressing or urgent. But now the Dominions have realised that not merely their interests, but their very existence, may depend upon the wise conduct of foreign relations; they are learning that the treatment of dependencies is of momentous importance to the world; they have all contributed the whole available strength of their manhood to support a struggle in whose direction they had little effective share. These things will have to be altered.

One way of altering them is that the Dominions and India should become independent states, as the American colonies did, in order that they may pursue a foreign policy and maintain a system of defence of their own. This solution is happily unlikely to be adopted, both because the component members of the Commonwealth value the security which it gives them, and still more because the sentiment of affection and unity, strong before the war, has been intensified by the comradeship of the war. Yet rashness or folly might bring about even this unlikely result; especially if the Dominions were persuaded that they were being endangered by a secret and irresponsible foreign policy.

On the other hand one school of publicists, whose views exercised a good deal of weight just before the war and during its first years, has been urgent that the British Commonwealth must be given a closer and more systematic organisation, must

become a real state with an effective central government, if it is to survive ; they have wrought out an elaborate project of federation, under which a central representative Parliament would be elected by all the self-governing members of the Commonwealth, each returning a number of members proportionate to its population and wealth ; and they have urged that this body should have powers of taxation, and should control foreign policy, defence, and the non-self-governing dependencies. The project is logical and orderly, and appeals to systematising minds. But it labours under two difficulties. India could not be fitted into such a scheme : her representatives would outnumber those of Britain and the self-governing Dominions put together by six to one. And the self-governing Dominions are evidently quite definitely unwilling to adopt any such scheme ; it is doubtful if even Britain would welcome it.

In truth no clear-cut and logical scheme which accords with the formulae of political scientists will suit the needs of the British Commonwealth ; for it is a baffling political structure, unlike any other that has ever existed on the face of the earth. It is at the same time one state and many states ; and its citizens, in the most illogical way, combine an intense loyalty to the Commonwealth as a whole—have they not proved it ?—with a very resolute determination to maintain the effective independence and statehood of the unit to which they belong. The political structure of the Commonwealth must reflect this illogical but real

duality. It must be the structure of something which is at once one state and many states.

We have been drifting towards this definition during the war; and since the war it has been pretty clearly formulated and accepted, though, in the British way, this momentous step has been taken without any clear discussion, or any formal legislative enactment. A new constitution for the British Commonwealth, or, at any rate, a new interpretation of the relation of its members, has been established before our eyes, without our realising just what has happened.

The war saw, on the one hand, not merely an Imperial Conference; it saw a strange new thing called the Imperial War Cabinet, including all the Prime Ministers of the Empire, which did not merely discuss, but took action upon, grave matters affecting the conduct of the war. Since the war, in the summer of 1921, we have seen this war-time improvisation revived and strengthened. The prime ministers and other leading statesmen of all the Dominions have combined to discuss the policy of the Commonwealth as a whole; and their deliberations have not only exercised a profound influence upon the immediate course of events, they have established a precedent of momentous importance. They have ensured that henceforward, on all matters of policy which affect all the members of the Commonwealth, the decision will rest no longer with the responsible statesmen of Britain alone, but with the responsible statesmen of the whole British Common-

wealth. In a strict sense, perhaps, these meetings were not cabinets at all, since there was no parliament to which their members were jointly and severally responsible. Yet in another sense, by one of those delightful anachronisms which are the charm of the British constitution, they were in the most definite way cabinets, since all their members were privy councillors and responsible ministers of the Crown, giving advice to the Crown on high matters. Here is one side of the matter: the Commonwealth acting as a single state ruled by a single king on the advice of his responsible ministers. But on the other hand, behold! all the Dominions have separate representation at the Congress of Versailles and in the Assembly of the League of Nations, and their representatives sign the treaties of peace, just as if they were acting as sovereign states as independent as France—or Guatemala. There have been some students who have contended that when this arrangement was made, the British Commonwealth was in effect dissolved, because its members were recognised as separate states; and, no doubt, logically this is so. But to confound the critics, lo! the British Empire as a single unit is a member of the Council of the League of Nations, and its three representatives on that body may include one or two spokesmen of the Dominions, now not treated as separate states, but as parts of a single state. Could anything be more illogical? Could anything be more practical? The British Commonwealth is one, and is many, at the same time.

And behold! it has found the mode of behaving as such.

The secret of all this is to be found in the antiquity of the British constitution, and in its freedom from rigidity. In law the Crown controls foreign policy and defence, through its ministers, who are, in the eyes of the law, the King's servants, whether they serve him in New Zealand or in Britain. True that the King no longer exercises independent power, and that he must act through ministers who have the confidence of the parliament (or parliaments) which votes (or vote) the necessary funds. If there are many parliaments to which one or other of the King's servants have to answer, and many parliaments which vote funds for the King's service, part of these funds being devoted to local purposes within the area served by each parliament, and part to general purposes of the Commonwealth as a whole, still all the ministers who spend these funds are the King's servants (which means, the Commonwealth's servants); and there is every reason why they should take counsel together to co-ordinate the advice they will give on policy, and to ensure that their various contributions to a common end are intelligently used.

In the same way, all judges, wherever they may be, and whatever system of law they may administer, are the King's judges, the exponents of the King's justice, the justice of the Commonwealth. So it is natural that appeals should lie from any of them (unless there is a definite law to the contrary) to the King's Privy Council, where in theory his

own final word is given. Thus we get the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, that most wonderful and romantic of courts in the history of law, where elderly and famous jurists sit, in a quiet panelled room in Downing Street, in a building as retiring and modest as the near-by house of the Prime Minister of Great Britain ; and before them come appeals from the far west of Canada, knotty problems in the Roman-Dutch law of South Africa, obscure difficulties about Hindu or Mahomedan customs—such a variety of peoples, under such a variety of systems of jurisprudence, as no court in all the history of justice has ever held jurisdiction over. It is an emblem of the diversity in unity which is the British Commonwealth.

Thus out of the ancient, flexible usages of the British constitution, out of the residuum of authority which remains in the King's office (now the supreme symbol of the unity of the Commonwealth as its innumerable parliaments have become the symbols of its diversity) there are burgeoning new devices and new methods, freely and flexibly, without any of the embarrassment of rigid federal constitutions which can never foresee every future emergency ; just as, in the remote past, there blossomed from the King's curia, as need required, common law courts and chancery courts, parliament and privy council, cabinet and prime minister. It is all quite illogical ; but it is illogical just because it is not mechanical but organic ; it grows like a plant, adapting itself continually to new needs ; it is not manufactured to a

pattern like a machine. The structure of this Commonwealth is indeed baffling and bewildering to the pedant who wants to adjust it to the formulae and categories of his political science. He can scarcely believe that it is a real living thing, or anything but a make-believe.

'A thing that is wholly a sham,' said Treitschke, speaking of the British Empire, 'cannot, in this world of ours, endure for ever.' Why did this Empire appear to Treitschke to be 'wholly a sham'? Was it not because it did not answer to any definition of the word 'Empire' to be found in German political philosophy; because it did not mean dominion and uniformity, but liberty and variety; because it did not rest upon Force, as, in his view, every firmly established state must do; because it was not governed by a single master, whose edicts all its subjects must obey? But for 'a thing that is wholly a sham' men do not lay down their lives, in thousands and in hundreds of thousands, not under the pressure of compulsion, but by a willing self-devotion; for the defence of 'a thing that is wholly a sham' men will not stream in from all the ends of the earth, abandoning their families and their careers, and offering without murmur or hesitation themselves and all they have and are. There must be a reality in the thing that calls forth such sacrifices, a reality of the kind to which *Realpolitik*, with its concentration upon purely material concerns, is wholly blind.

This amazing political structure, which refuses

to fall within any of the categories of political science, which is an empire and yet not an empire, a state and yet not a state, a super-nation incorporating in itself an incredible variety of peoples and races, is not a structure which has been designed by the ingenuity of man, or created by the purposive action of a government; it is a natural growth, the product of the spontaneous activity of innumerable individuals and groups springing from among peoples whose history has made liberty and the tolerance of differences their most fundamental instincts; it is the outcome of a series of accidents, unforeseen, but turned to advantage by the unfailing and ever-new resourcefulness of men habituated to self-government. There is no logic or uniformity in its system, which has arisen from an infinite number of makeshifts and tentative experiments, yet in all of these a certain consistency appears, because they have been presided over by the genius of self-government. It is distributed over every continent, is washed by every ocean, includes half the dust of islands that Nature has scattered about the seas of the world, controls almost all the main avenues of the world's sea-going commerce, and is linked together by ten thousand ships perpetually going to and fro. Weak for offensive purposes, because its resources are so scattered, it is, except at a few points, almost impregnable against attack, if its forces are well organised. It includes among its population representatives of almost every human race and religion, and every grade of

civilisation, from the Australian Bushman to the subtle and philosophic Brahmin, from the African dwarf to the master of modern industry or the scholar of universities. Almost every form of social organisation and of government known to man is represented in its complex and many-hued fabric. It embodies five of the most completely self-governing communities which the world has known, and four of these control the future of the great empty spaces that remain for the settlement of white men. It finds place for the highly organised caste system by which the teeming millions of India are held together. It preserves the simple tribal organisation of the African clans. To different elements among its subjects this empire appears in different aspects. To the self-governing Dominions it is a brotherhood of free nations, co-operating for the defence and diffusion of common ideas and of common institutions. To the ancient civilisations of India it is a power which, in spite of all its mistakes and limitations, has brought peace instead of turmoil, law instead of arbitrary might, unity instead of chaos, justice instead of oppression, freedom for the development of the capacities and characteristic ideas of their peoples, and the prospect of a steady growth of national unity and political responsibility. To the backward races it has meant the suppression of unending slaughter, the disappearance of slavery, the protection of the rights and usages of primitive and simple folk against reckless exploitation, and the chance

of gradual improvement and emancipation from barbarism. But to all alike, to one quarter of the inhabitants of the world, it has meant the establishment of the Reign of Law, and of the Liberty which can only exist under its shelter. In some degree, though imperfectly as yet, it has realised within its own body all the three great political ideas of the modern world. It has fostered the rise of a sense of nationhood in the young communities of the new lands, and in the old and decaying civilisations of the most ancient historic countries. It has given a freedom of development to self-government such as history has never before known. And by linking together so many diverse and contrasted peoples in a common peace, it has already realised, for a quarter of the globe, the ideal of internationalism on a scale undreamt of by the most sanguine prophets of Europe, and set the model for the organised unity-in-freedom of the world.

Truly this empire is a fabric so wonderful, so many-sided, and so various in its aspects, that it may well escape the rigid categories of a German professor, and seem to him 'wholly a sham.' It has the variety and the unexpectedness of life. The purposes which it has served are too many and too noble, the loyalties which it has challenged too deep, to permit us to think that it will die. Despite all the blunders and even crimes that have been committed in its name, it will survive, changing its form as it grows, like

a great banyan tree; and even if its parent stem should shrivel and perish, this will remain the central shrine of the cathedral made by its living pillars. It will last on as the core of that world-unity which its long and varied history has done so much to create.

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